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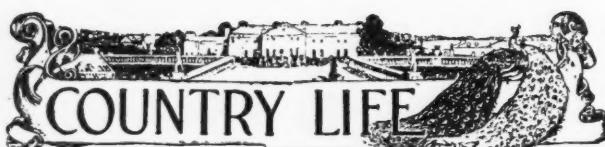
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MISS ALICE HUGHES,

MISS DORA DUNNING.

52, Gower Street,



**THE Journal for all interested in  
Country Life and Country Pursuits**

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## EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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With this week's issue of COUNTRY LIFE is published a supplement descriptive of the forthcoming volume of the COUNTRY LIFE Library, entitled "The Gardens of Italy."

## CAN TOWNSMEN . . . FARM?

**T**HIS significant question forms the heading of an article in the current number of the *World's Work*; but the writer, as far as we can see, vouchsafes no reply whatever. He has much to say as to the preparation for farming given by the various agricultural colleges, and much of it is of a most useful and practical nature. For example, it is a matter of considerable importance to most people to find out, before sending their sons to agricultural colleges, exactly what the cost is likely to be. Comparatively few rich men see in agriculture sufficient scope for their boys; but many people with only a moderate amount of capital look to it as a suitable means of earning a living. There are few lives more attractive than that of the farmer to those whose temperament fits them for it. It is interesting, because a hundred things are always demanding his oversight. He rides about on his horse to see that the hedger and ditcher is doing his work properly; that the men and women on the fields are ploughing, weeding, sowing, reaping, or whatever may be the suitable task for the season. The health and fortunes of his livestock are a fascinating care, that may cause him worry at periods of ill-luck, but, generally speaking, afford a healthy amusement. The breeding of animals attracts many people to it as a hobby, and demands judgment, observation, and knowledge in a very high degree. To bring the young things on, whether they are lambs, or pigs, or calves, or horses, is always more or less a matter of experiment. The good farmer may have his general lines mapped out definitely enough, but he will always try to improve the details, so that the work of to-day may be better than that of yesterday. Farming is always more or less of a sporting

life. Usually, those who begin young take keenly to shooting and other pastimes, though almost invariably they lose taste for them as they grow older. But still, a tenant should be able to take his place at a shooting party, and once a year, at least, a model landlord will always ask him to do so. He need not ride regularly to hounds, but when the meet is on his own holding it is a compliment to be present, and he will derive satisfaction from the knowledge that a good run has had its origin in his covert. Perhaps it may be as well, however, if he do not get too much interested in bloodstock or greyhounds, for behind these temptation lurks, even as Satan is said to hide behind the Cross.

It is no wonder then if this wholesome, healthy, open-air life should allure to it many of those who are weary of the city's smoke and dust, and it is worth asking if the merchant's son, who, it may well be, has never held the stilt of a plough in his life or done more agriculture than is involved in watching the haymakers on a summer day, has any chance of earning a competency on the land. It may be said at once that he starts at a great disadvantage as compared with the boy whose father was a farmer, and who has been brought up on the land. To the latter the processes of agriculture come naturally. From childhood onward he has taken part in the feeding and nursing of animals; he has seen the ploughs go forth to plough in spring, and in autumn has ridden to and from the fields in the harvest carts. His life, in a word, has been spent among those whose daily labour it is to make the earth yield her increase. All that college can do for him is to supplement from the resources of science what he has already learned by experience. For example, his father may have been one of the old school whose cattle were not of the highest pedigree; who used the manure that came to his hand; who did not know the potency of new breeds of wheat, and was ignorant of much else that science has been slowly disclosing. But this new knowledge would come quite easily to him. On the other hand, his rival from the town must begin *ab initio*. We may suppose him a lad of seventeen or thereabouts, who probably has been to some more or less fashionable middle-class school, and has emerged from it with an ignorance of country life which would be astounding were it not so common. Most likely, if the case is to be stated candidly, his father had other views for him. We see that one of the principals of an agricultural college comments upon the fact that so many boys are sent into farming after they have failed in something else. He finds that his pupils could not pass the Army or the Navy examination, or that they failed to secure entrance into one of the learned professions. The cases are few and far between in which a town man of business fixes upon agriculture as a calling for his child at the very beginning. It is an afterthought following some other failure. Nor ought this to be counted as any discredit to the boys. A man may have plenty of natural capacity that will find outlet in agriculture, and yet be incapable of passing a book examination.

But, on the other hand, there are certain advantages possessed by the boy who has been brought up in an atmosphere of business. Farming is no longer the haphazard profession that it used to be. Every branch of it requires the most careful book-keeping, without which progress is impossible. If the farm be a dairy one, the daily yield of each cow, and the quality of its milk as shown by the percentage of butter-fat, the days that it remains in milk, its total yield for the year, the number of its calves, their pedigree, and, as far as possible, the pedigrees of the sire and dam, all need to be recorded and considered. So with other branches of farming. Never before was the clerk so much needed as he is to-day. A good clerk and some willing labourers—that is the ideal staff for the modern farm, and it can, and must, be worked in a business way. Farming in the old style, as everybody knows, tended to the discouragement of these qualities. Ask one of the old school how much hay he gives to each cow per day, and he will almost invariably answer a forkful, quite careless of the fact that his servant may make a forkful whatever he thinks proper, while the young modern scientific farmer of the agricultural college is equally certain to give you an exact weight. But the townsman has more advantage than comes from mere business aptitude. For one thing, his mind is clear of many prejudices that have been steadily instilled into that of the young countryman, and prejudices are a fatal obstacle to modern farming, which to a large extent consists in setting old methods, old beliefs, old systems, and old traditions at defiance. This is the townsman has every chance of learning how to farm, and there is no reason whatever why he should not be successful; while it would be of the utmost benefit to the country if a fair proportion of the sons of our commercial classes could be induced to return to the land.

## Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Miss Dora Dunning. Miss Dunning is the daughter of Sir Edwin Harris Dunning of Stoodleigh Court, Stoodleigh, North Devon.



**A**LL loyal subjects of the Crown will welcome the official announcement that arrangements have now been made for the Prince and Princess of Wales to visit India next November. The present programme is that they should visit the chief towns and the more important Native States, returning to this country in March of next year. We understand that arrangements have also been made to entertain His Royal Highness, whose distinction as a sportsman is well known, with some of the unrivalled shooting to be found in India. It is very suitable and proper that the "immediate heir of England" should visit the greatest of our principalities, and when this tour is completed he will have a knowledge of the Empire beyond that which was possible to any of his ancestors. It is just thirty years since his father, King Edward VII., then Prince of Wales, made a similar tour through India, and the memory of it still endures, and has tightened the bonds between it and the Mother Country. It was a right step to take in 1875, but the development of the Imperial spirit since then makes it still more important that his successor should follow in his footsteps.

Much dismay was caused last week by a report sent out by the usually trustworthy Reuter to the effect that the Commission appointed to enquire into the North Sea outrage had practically decided in favour of the Russian case and against that of England. The intelligence, however, proved to be wrong. The Commission finds that Admiral Rozhdestvensky had no reason to believe that torpedo-boats were in the neighbourhood of the Russian warships; that he was not justified in firing; and that, in any event, the firing was prolonged beyond a reasonable time. Foreign newspapers which are able to see facts of this kind in a fair perspective are almost unanimous in taking the report as a censure upon the Russians and as a complete justification of the English case. The Commissioners, however, at the end of their report, went out of their way to pass, as it were, a vote of confidence in Admiral Rozhdestvensky, saying that they had no reason to doubt his military gifts or his humanity. Of course, a body composed as the Commission was is not judicial in its nature, and it would have been unfair to expect it to pass any sweeping condemnation; yet the end of the report certainly contradicts the beginning. However, it would be idle to grumble at what was, no doubt, meant simply as an act of courtesy. What remains now is the settlement of the amount of the indemnity which Russia should pay.

The collection of domesticated animals at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, has just been enriched by a specimen of what is probably the smallest breed of sheep in existence. This is the Cameroon maned sheep—*Ovis jubatus pygmaeus*. Though an adult ram, this example only stands 19in. high at the shoulder. Horns are represented by a pair of conical stumps about  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long. The woolly covering of the typical sheep has been replaced by a hairy coat remarkable for its coloration. While the upper parts are of a reddish colour, the head and under parts are jet black, relieved in the legs by red stripes. The Cameroon sheep recalls the little Soa sheep of St. Kilda, but the latter is much the more shapely of the two. The diminutive size of both may probably be due largely to adverse external conditions. Long since, it should be noted, a dwarf race of sheep, no larger than the animal now under discussion, lived in these islands, remains thereof having been found in Wiltshire, and it will be a matter of no little interest if scientific examination should prove a connection between the ancient dwarf sheep of Britain and the subject of this notice.

A notable figure has passed out of literature in the person of Sir Wemyss Reid, who died at his house in Bramham Gardens, South Kensington, on Sunday, in his sixty-third year. Sir Wemyss Reid's early reputation as a journalist was made as editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, at the head of which he was from 1870 to 1887. After that he came up to London, but probably

made the change somewhat too late in life, as the editorship of the *Speaker*, though in every way creditable to him, did not result in the brilliant success that had been prophesied. As it were, the foundation of it was not well and truly laid, and in 1899 he retired from the chair. He succeeded much more brilliantly as general manager and director of the firm of Cassell and Co. His services to journalism and literature were recognised by his title and various academical honours bestowed upon him. That he was a most capable provincial editor is beyond all cavil or dispute.

A number of the most brilliant men of letters of the day have issued a vigorous protest against the Shakespeare house which it is proposed to set up as a memorial to the most illustrious name in English literature. The idea was to make this a museum, library, and lecture hall; and on each count they ruthlessly condemn it. As a Shakespeare museum it would be impossible that the place would be even second rate, since all the important Shakespeare relics have already been collected, and it is in the highest degree improbable that the institutions now possessing them would make a surrender of their treasures, while there is no likelihood whatever of future ages adding anything of importance to what we already possess. Very much the same argument applies to the library, which might be a very good library for general purposes, but as a Shakespeare library would be hopelessly inferior to the collection in the British Museum. The idea of a lecture hall is dismissed summarily, as they say "accommodation exists on every hand for all the lecturing that could reasonably be desired and for much that is of doubtful utility." The whole scheme, in fact, looks as if it had been evolved to perpetuate the memory of some second-rate philanthropist instead of that of a great poet.

#### THE WOODED PATH.

So long a Winter, such an Arctic night  
Made us forget that ever Spring was bright.  
But hark! the blackbird's voice, like a clear flame! . . .  
So long the Winter! Such an Age of chill  
Made me forget this silver-birch-clad hill:  
But see, the golden lambstails put to shame  
That death of Winter's; bracken-fronds like flame  
Tint this new morning's dimmed, tender light.  
So long, so long the Winter in our hearts  
We had forgotten that dead grief departs,  
And had forgotten that our hands could meet . . .  
So long: so long! Remember our last May  
When there was sunlight still and every day  
New swallows skimmed low down along the street.  
—Ay! Spring shall come: but shall we ever meet  
With the old hearts in this forgotten way?

FORD MADOX HUEFFER.

The proposals made at the Farmers' Club for the relief of the pressure upon agriculture deserve the consideration of all those who are connected with the landed interest. Let us take them one by one. There is first the recommendation that tithe and land tax should be redeemed compulsorily. As to the former of these, we have frequently pointed out how absurd and unjust is the incidence of tithe. When the Commutation took place in 1837, tithe was laid on each separate field, and naturally at that time the grain-bearing districts were much more valuable than the pastoral districts; but the advance of agriculture has during the progress of time reversed this state of things completely, and much of the heavily-tithed land has either gone down to a very low rent, or is out of cultivation altogether, while the best pastures have become very valuable indeed. If there were no other reason than the injustice caused by this fluctuation, it would be advisable to clear the land of tithe altogether, and we trust that the farmers will do more than pass a resolution—that they will make a strenuous and united effort to get some practical steps taken during the present session of Parliament. And what applies to tithe applies also, *mutatis mutandis*, to land tax.

The other proposals made by the farmers were that agricultural land should be exempt from assessment for rating purposes, and that there should be an up-to-date and year-by-year calculation of State aid granted towards the pay of Poor Law Officers and of the Agricultural Rates Relief Act. Education, they hold, should be paid entirely by the State, and the corollary of that would seem to be free education, not for the working classes only, but for everybody. In fact, it would eventually lead to the thorough systematisation of national education. Finally, the farmers claim that the State should give some aid towards meeting the cost of county main roads. The last is a very important matter, on which we have many times had occasion to dwell. Roads have ceased to have that almost exclusive local traffic which previously justified their upkeep by local rates. The heaviest and most wearing traffic is that of brewers' and other carts, and of travelling threshing-machines and other

traction-engines, none of which has, as a rule, any local habitation. Motor-cars come from a distance, but it would suit their owners to pay a little more in the shape of State taxes in order that the roads might be kept in much better condition than they are just now. The whole scheme of the Farmers' Club is most useful and practical, and we most earnestly trust an endeavour will be made to carry it out.

In the current number of the *Cornhill Magazine* a writer, who signs himself "Palamedes," writes a pleasant article on "The Deserted Village," and we only wish that it were as accurate as it is agreeable; but the very first sentence contains a misstatement of fact, which does not conduce to our reliance on what follows. "Some years ago," says the writer, "the *Morning Post* coined the expression 'the rural exodus.'" We can assure him that the *Morning Post* did nothing of the kind. The expression in question was invented by the writer of the book called "The Rural Exodus," and we should be extremely surprised to find it had ever been used before the publication of that volume. Probably the confusion has arisen from the fact that the author subsequently wrote a great deal in regard to the same subject in the columns of the *Morning Post*. However, that is a mere detail. What strikes us most is the extraordinary account which "Palamedes" gives of the wages paid in his neighbourhood.

In order that there may be no mistake, we quote the writer's own words. He begins by referring to the labourer who propounded the opinion that he thought every man ought to be able to earn "two bob a day," and he goes on, "That is surely a sufficiently modest ambition. Unfortunately those who attain to it are few and far between. The average wages of labourers—carters earn a shilling or two more—are 10s. precisely." Now Mr. Wilson Fox made a very careful investigation in regard to the wages earned by agricultural labourers throughout Great Britain, and in no district of Sussex is the rate of weekly wages anything like so low. In June, 1903, the last date for which the figures are given—and there is no reason to think they have fallen since—at Rye, Hastings, Battle, and Petworth, they were 15s. a week, and they ranged in other places from 13s. to 17s. a week. This was exclusive of piecework payment, and extra wages earned during hay and corn harvest.

Mr. Wilson Fox cites a typical farm in Sussex, the area of which is 690 acres, 138 of which are arable and 414 permanent pasture. The men regularly employed on this holding are a foreman, seventeen ordinary labourers, three men in charge of horses, seven cattlemen, and one shepherd, and there are also four boys. The ordinary labourers work from seven in the morning to five at night, and they receive in cash 15s. a week, in addition to which they have a free house, garden, and straw for pigs. This is the lowest rate of wages paid on that particular farm. Now we happen to know that the very greatest pains were taken to procure these facts on the spot, and they come not only from the employers, but from the workmen as well, so that we have every right to treat them as credible. At least, it would be monstrous if a public servant were in an official document to misstate the facts in any way; but they are an absolute contradiction to those which are set forth by the writer in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

The intended transfer of the control of the Thames steamboat piers to the London County Council from the Thames Conservancy Board, announced at the meeting of the latter body this week, ought to prove a very appreciable aid to the successful and permanent re-establishment of the cheap river steamboat service which Londoners and their visitors have missed for some years past. Rightly or wrongly, the charges levied for the use of these piers upon the steamboat owners have been alleged as one of the chief obstacles to a remunerative passenger service on the river in the past, and this handicap will now be removed. On the other hand, the chief argument brought forward for the change at the Conservancy meeting was that the sum received for pier tolls was not worth retaining when compared with the necessary expenses of maintenance and management; so that the gain to the steamboats seems still no certain one. It is much to be hoped that the new "penny steamer" service will be remunerative and successful, for in the summer months it is of practical convenience to very many, and a source of much pleasure to a large number more.

The Simplon Tunnel is almost entirely free from the objections which are felt by many lovers of Switzerland and its scenery for the numerous new railway schemes now projected, and the shortening of the journey from Calais to Milan by nearly a hundred miles will in itself be a benefit distinctly appreciated by English travellers. It is exactly fifty years ago that the first concession for a railway tunnel through the Alps was obtained by a French company; but the nature of the undertaking was sufficiently heavy to postpone the attack upon the mountains at this point till long after the completion of the two

other sub-Alpine routes of Mount Cenis and the St. Gothard. Both the length of the Simplon borings and the depth at which they penetrate the mountain have made this undertaking a very notable engineering work, and it has been carried out with remarkable precision and success, in spite of unforeseen difficulties. The opening of this new route into Italy from France will necessitate, before many years pass, a more direct line from Paris to Geneva and the valley of the Upper Rhone. In the meantime, an immediate improvement may be expected of the existing service to Lausanne and Southern Switzerland by way of Dijon and the Pontarlier line over the Jura.

The statement of the Lord Mayor at the recent meeting of the General Omnibus Company will have been read with interest by many who are not directly concerned with the company itself, by reason of its hopeful prognostications about motor-omnibuses in London. To many of the public it has seemed singular that these vehicles, with their very obvious advantages, have been so long in coming into general use. The first part of the explanation is that companies formed for putting them on the streets have failed to make them a financial success; but the second and complementary part of the explanation, why they have failed commercially, has not been quite so obvious. The Lord Mayor indicates that the General Omnibus Company have been making a special study of the reasons that these other companies have not succeeded, and appears to think that, guided by the lessons of their failure and taking advantage of the exceptional position of the General Omnibus Company, they may hope soon to put on the streets a service of motors that will be, at the same time, appreciated by the public and profitable to the shareholders.

#### WHITE AND GOLD.

When God made flowers, long ago,  
I think He loved the daisies best,  
And planted them that men might know  
Himself had kissed earth's breast.  
And scattered them on down and lea,  
The jewels of a lover's pride,  
So shy and strong they well might be  
A girdle for His bride.  
So shy and strong and innocent,  
They well might crown a virgin's hair,  
Or at her feet rest well content  
To be Heaven's humble stair.  
Content to be Heaven's humble stair,  
By careless human footsteps trod,  
Yet none the baser or less fair,  
And still the shrine of God.  
And I shall face the great white throne  
And all the saints with crowns of gold  
More fearlessly since I have known  
God's little thrones of old.

H. H. BASHFORD.

The Committee of the M.C.C. and the Board of Control for the Test Matches have come to a decision which, both by its prudence and by the direction in which it points, is likely to commend itself to public opinion. It recommends to the M.C.C. in general meeting that the decision of choice of innings in these matches shall be by toss, unless otherwise arranged. Presumably the arrangement "otherwise" would lie with the captains of the opposing teams. There are certain Tories who may object to this as a tampering with laws of cricket which they seem to regard as being fixed as eternally as the laws of Nature. In point of fact, however, the choice of innings has not always been decided by toss. In the laws of cricket cited by Nyren, previous to their revision by the M.C.C. in 1830, the rule runs: "When two matches are played to decide the question of superiority, the party leaving home are allowed the privilege of pitching the first wicket, also the choice of going in first or not." And in cases of home and home matches it certainly seems as if the older rule makes for equity. Matches "to decide the question of superiority" seems just another way of saying "Test" matches.

The fourth International Congress of Ornithologists is to be held this year in London, under the presidency of Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe of the Natural History Museum. The official work of the Congress will commence on Monday, June 12th, and conclude on Saturday, June 17th. During the next week, however, excursions are to be made to places calculated to interest the numerous continental savants who have signified their intention to be present. The Congress is to be congratulated on its president this year, for Dr. Sharpe is admittedly one of the ablest ornithologists living. During his reign—which has been a long one—over the bird department of the British Museum he has raised the collection from one of very insignificant proportions to the rank of the finest in the world, an achievement of which he is justly proud. That the meeting this year

will be a huge success there can be no doubt. The Prince of Wales has kindly consented to become a patron. Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, the veteran co-discover of the Darwinian theory, is to be a vice-president. The Hon. Walter Rothschild, the Duke of Bedford, Dr. P. L. Sclater, F.R.S., Dr. F. D. Godman, F.R.S., and others eminent in the world of natural history, and of ornithology in particular, are giving the meeting their heartiest support. It is hoped that all interested in ornithology in this country will seize this opportunity of aiding their favourite study, and of meeting men whom they may know well by name, but have never seen.

The kindly thoughtfulness of His Majesty the King in sending the head of Ambush II. to the Natural History Museum will be much appreciated by the authorities. And this because an effort is being made to unravel the tangled threads of a very intricate problem—the origin of the thorough-bred. Quite recently evidence has come to light, through the researches of Mr. R. Lydekker, which goes far to show that the Arab stock

from which our thorough-bred has descended was originally brought from India. This evidence is based upon the fact that the skulls of the far-famed Stockwell and Bend Or, now in the British Museum, bear traces of a pit which answers to the pit which lodged a face gland in the skull of the fossil three-toed horse, Hipparrison, of the Pliocene Age, and certain Indian fossil horses of the Siwaliks. It now remains to be seen whether the skulls of Ambush II. and Donovan, which have just been added to the collections of the museum, will also present this pit, and at the same time confirm Mr. Lydekker's contention. A rival theory, it may be mentioned, was recently promulgated by Professor Ridgway of Cambridge, who has endeavoured to show, but we venture to think unsuccessfully, that Grey's zebra (*Equus griseus*) is the probable ancestor of the thorough-bred stock. It would appear that the Indian fossil horses just referred to have left direct descendants in certain domesticated breeds now found in India. Finally, if Mr. Lydekker's theory is correct, the thorough-bred of to-day will prove to be a species distinct from the "cold-blooded" horses of Europe.

## THE VILLAGE INN.

**F**EW of those whose interest in village life is practical would attempt to deny that, as matters stand, the village inn is an institution that cannot be done away with. What it can be made, however, is a house for legitimate refreshment and recreation and not for drunkenness. The object of the Trust founded by Lord Grey was to accomplish this, but in some cases the ideal inn has simply grown out of its natural surroundings. This, at any rate, is the case with one of the two pleasant hosteries which have supplied the subjects for our illustrations to-day. Unfortunately, the same thing cannot be copied in other places throughout the land. To begin with, you cannot always get a mansion dated 1680, with secret chambers and many of the other appendages of a romantic old house, for a village inn, and, secondly, it would be necessary to travel far in these days to find a landlord who is of the fourth generation of those who have occupied the same position in the hostelry. He is very typical of the publicans that one used to find, but, alas, finds very seldom now in the English village. There can be little question of adulteration in his house, for he is something



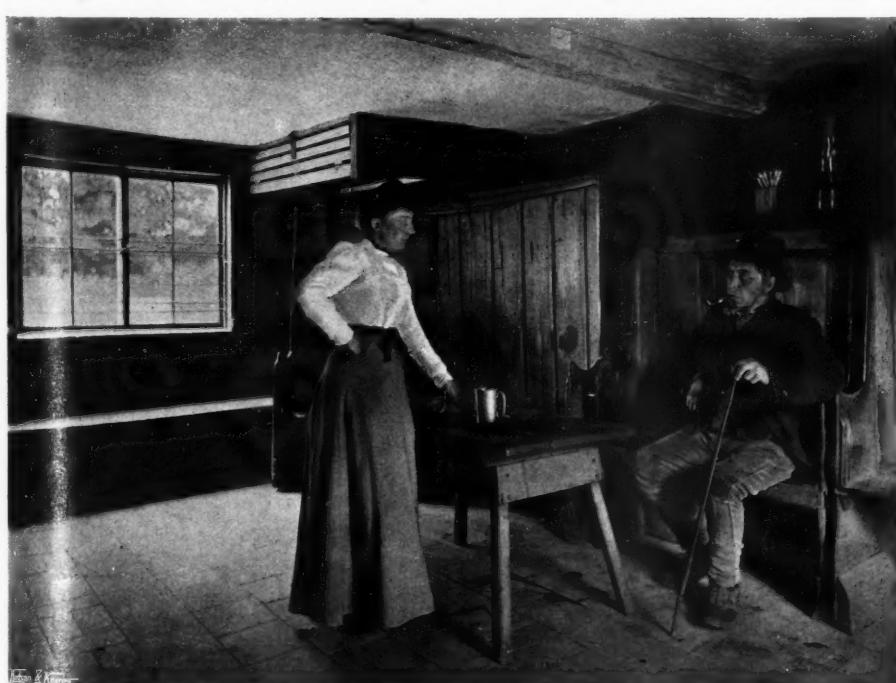
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## A VILLAGE TAVERN.

of a farmer as well as a landlord, and himself grows the barley, and brews the ale that he serves to his customers. And he has an Englishman's dislike of all beer that is not home-brewed. He is not a large consumer of his own product; but when he does lift a foaming tankard to his lips it is a pleasure to watch his expression of mingled pride and satisfaction. It is a self-managed household, and the girl who waits is his own daughter, and very superior in manners and education to the ordinary barmaid, as may be guessed from the fact that at one time she was organist of the village church, and is really a finished musician. The romance of the house lies in its secret chamber, and how well this is concealed may be judged from the fact that the opening is from a bedroom, and for fifteen years a man-servant occupied this room and never found out that there was a secret passage leading from it.

And now, if the courteous reader will be pleased in imagination to seat himself on the long settle by the fire, and call for whatever beverage it may please him to drink the landlord's health in, we will watch the long procession of customers that in the course of a single day visit this hostelry. First, there comes the toiler, with his tools in his hand, going off to his morning work. He is one of the few rural swains who, following an



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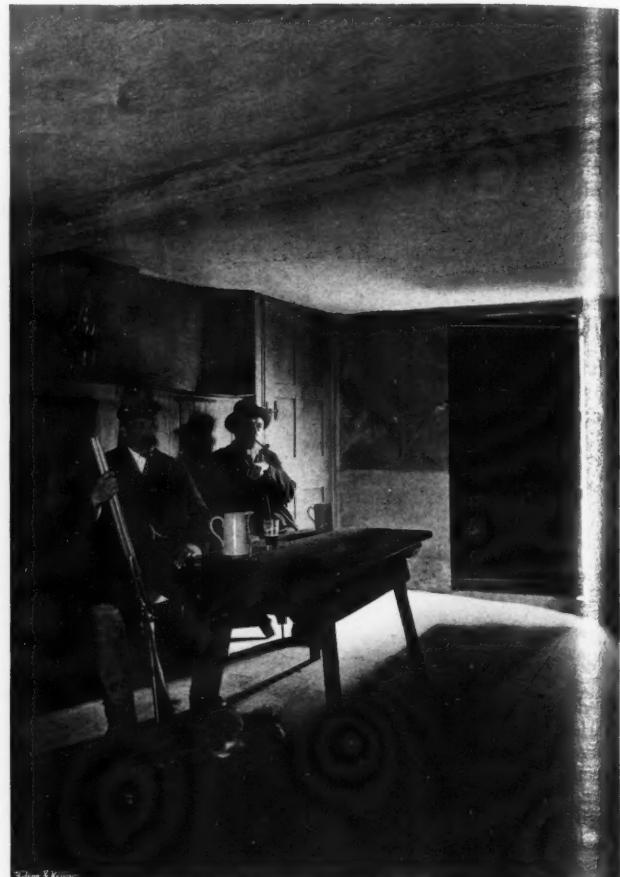
## TIRED AND THIRSTY.

example set in town, start work on a morning draught. Let them that are without sin throw the first stone, or infer, as they may, that the journeys of the little brown jug had been too frequent the night before. He is an exception to the general rule, and, provided that he marches on when he has emptied his glass, a wise man knows when to see and when to wink.



*W. Page. RABBIT AND RAT-CATCHERS.* Copyright

He is the only one who has any chance of arriving before breakfast; but in the course of the forenoon the waiting damsel has to attend to a great variety of customers. Some are well known, and are great favourites. For example, we may take the bit of a ne'er-do-well who is the rabbit and rat catcher of the district. He is one of those who never could settle down to regular work, but the roaming Bohemianism of field and farm building suits him perfectly, and he is never so happy as on a cold, rainy day, when he has his ferret in the burrow and his nets over the chief bolt-holes, and is listening intently to what sounds the rabbits are making as their fierce little assailant chases them from one corner



*W. Page. AFTER A MORNING'S SPORT.* Copyright

to another of their fortress, till they are at last obliged to bolt, as they think, into the open, more often to find themselves rumpled up in a net, from which they will escape only to receive an artistic quietus from the thumb of their captor. Should they be lucky enough to creep past the net, then the mongrel, which is the rabbit-catcher's other chief companion, has an innings on his own account, and generally succeeds in making good his object, for the rabbit when driven from his home is always a little bewildered, as though he were not sure to what refuge he should fly, while the dog, long accustomed to this work, makes for him in the most direct and unhesitating manner. If the rat-catcher be taken to represent the Bohemianism of his calling, the gamekeeper who drops in with his gun in his hand may be

said to stand for its respectability or gentility. He, too, has been out after rabbits, as witness the booty lying at his feet; but lord of the situation, if not of the soil, he can beat them up where he will, or, if necessary, employ ferrets and shoot them as they come out. In his visit to the place there is a certain amount of condescension, and well he knows that some of those most willing to fill his mug with beer are, when the dusk of evening has settled down over the fields, the keenest to attempt to outwit him and spoil the coves of the game which he has so carefully bred and nurtured during the spring



*W. Page. A CLOSE GAME.* Copyright

and summer months. Perhaps to the student of Nature neither of them is quite as entertaining as the ordinary professional tramp, who, as long as the weather is not too cold, swings back and forward between the towns, always in search of work, and taking the greatest care never to find it. He is not what one would call a wholesale customer, and, indeed, wears a look of smug satisfaction, amounting almost to joy, on his face when he can produce for payment anything that is white in colour. Usually he has to excavate long in the depths of his breeches pocket before he can produce that solitary copper which is the fee exacted for the humblest of all intoxicating drinks. Yet even "a arf and arf" of four ale, and the thinnest stout or porter, is a gratification, and probably as he drinks it he thinks the satisfaction cheaply earned, since it cost him no more than a piteous and professional whine, addressed to one of those soft and relenting faces which he has the art of singling out in the course of his wanderings. He swears with many deadly oaths that "it was but for a bit of chuck, sir," and he had "walked twenty miles, begad, and tasted neither meat nor drink on the way." But he would not tell that tale in the public-house, out of which he was most probably turned the night before by the landlord, who has a stern objection to having such characters about after dusk. He has, however, become so much accustomed to that kind of treatment, that it fails to jar even on the last rudiments of sensibility left him, and is like a dog that will accept a bone, be it thrown to him by his deadliest enemy and accompanied by the most contemptuous language.

But it is in the evening when the mirth in the public-house grows fast and furious. The English rustic, who has long considered himself under the surveillance of many masters, including not only the farmer, his employer, but the "squire," "the parson of the parish," and "the attorney," never acts quite freely until after dusk. In the gloaming is the time when he develops his personality and pursues his individual objects. If he be a lover, it is when twilight is creeping down that he slinks off across the fields, probably to meet his love at the end of a lane, and recline lovingly with her against a gate till

public-house. Perhaps it is not well; but whoever knows the overcrowding that is still too prevalent in English villages will not rashly condemn the householder who betakes himself to the inn. After all, it is a trial on a man who has been working hard all day to be shut in a single room with a wife who, probably, has not the best of tempers, since toil and child-bearing and ceaseless anxiety to make both ends meet do not



W. Page.

THE INGLE CORNER.

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conduce to joyousness of disposition; and the children wrangle, and the baby cries, and life, in one word, is a misery. So John creeps out of his cottage once a week at least and makes his way to the place where he can find light and good company and beer. It would be a mistake to suppose that he drinks a great deal. As a matter of fact, he cannot afford it, and Boniface, if he be of a confiding disposition, will tell you that one of his grievances is that the stingy ploughman will come and order one half pint of the smallest ale, and, keeping that before him, make it a pretext for sitting there all night—a pathetic tale, but a true one. However,

most of the swains have more merriment in their nature than would seem to be implied by this melancholy anecdote. They have a great many pleasing games wherewith they enliven the proceedings. The commonest are those shown in our illustrations. They play cards, and they play dominoes, the height of smartness being that exemplified in the old North Country song of him who could "play a six to a four or a five to an eight." Between whilsts the jest and laugh go round—the old stories, so much the better for being retold, the old jokes that have grown mellow with age and smooth and ripe by endless repetition, the exclamations over big turnips and the inevitable sheep with five legs that occur so regularly and yet never grow stale. As long as they are engaged in these pastimes, it may be taken for certain that they will not drink unduly; and, indeed, in the hostelry that we have had mostly in our mind, it is very seldom indeed that, in the words of the eloquent Scotch proverb, "the maut gets aboon the meal."

Probably it would be going too far to say that this never takes place, since an eminent statistician has just worked out figures which show that the agricultural labourer spends about a shilling a week on the average for drink. But, after all, the sum is not a very large one. If divided into twopences, it would allow two-pennyworth of drink for six days in the week, and nothing for Sunday; whereas what happens in the majority of cases is that, once a fortnight or once a month, the labourer wastes a good deal in this way, but abstains completely for the rest of the time. Of course, there are topers in this as there are in every other class; but the word would certainly be a



W. Page.

A HAND AT CARDS.

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bedtime comes. If he be to politics inclined, then is the time when he scurries off to some semi-political, semi-religious meeting, where, with a fine mixture of reforming zeal and piety, the demagogue of the district lays bare the iniquities of those who toil not, neither do they spin. But all men are not reforming philosophers, nor do many of them continue to be lovers after a certain age has past; but they can all go to the



W. Page.

TIRED OUT.

Copyright

misdemeanor of a labourer of the ordinary type, and we believe that the modern tendency is all towards temperance. At least, at rural merry-makings and fairs, which as late as a generation ago were the scenes of much dissipation, it often happens that scarcely an intoxicated man can be met with, and this we are inclined to accept as a sign that his ways are improving, and that the sot is a disappearing species.

## NATURE BOOKS.

**T**HERE must be a very real demand for books dealing with the open air and Nature, if the continual production of works of this kind be any criterion. Publishers, it is certain, would not take the trouble to print and bind and offer such volumes unless they found a public ready to accept their wares. The fact is, within the last score or so of years, the general public has been steadily educated for this kind of literature. Richard Jefferies, whose books we believe and hope will be read for many a generation yet to come, was one of the first of modern Nature writers to delve in the rich field whence have been opened out those stores of pleasure and delight which seem so greatly to appeal to readers of the present day. His example has been followed by scores of authors, some few of whom have succeeded in producing works of real and abiding interest. White of Selborne, the forerunner and prototype of all this school, is not only still read, but read by such increasing numbers of people that edition after edition of his delightful book continues to be put before the public.

The tendency of the last few generations has, unhappily, been to forsake the country and to flock into the towns. Already, there are symptoms that this tendency is on the wane. If this is truly the case, the better will it be for the future of British manhood; the destroying effects of urban existence are but too painfully apparent to all those who watch carefully the symptoms and the phenomena of modern life, especially the life of the poor in our great manufacturing centres.

It is not a little curious, yet perfectly natural, that as the Englishman of the present day finds his daily environment more and more circumscribed by bricks and mortar, and made hideous by smoke, darkness, and fog, so his thoughts should recur to that country-side wherein his happier ancestors were bred and born and passed their lives. He cannot, except by rare and infrequent snatches of holiday, obtain the real thing, and he finds a pleasing solace in the many books dealing with Nature and wild life which are now poured forth from the press. If he cannot with his own eyes see the country-side, with its never-ending procession of beauty and change, its glorious pageants of the seasons, its birds, its woods, its meadows, and its flowers, he finds much to refresh his soul in the modern Nature book. All this is an excellent symptom, a symptom of that gradual revolt against cities and their too obvious miseries and disadvantages, which one may hope

and believe will in time drive considerable portions of our urban population back to the land again. These books of Nature are in effect doing an excellent work, and are sowing seed which we believe will bear good fruit in the future.

Three volumes on the country and wild life lie before us. They are of varying type, yet all in their way are excellent. The first of these, "The Country Day by Day" (Heinemann), is by an author, Mr. E. Kay Robinson, whose work is too well known to require much laudation in this paper. No writer of the present day has succeeded so completely in throwing himself into the heart of his subject; few watch so carefully every sign and mark of the country-side, of the changing season, and of the processions of birds that, far more than most people can imagine, are perpetually passing to and fro in Britain. "E. K. R." is, in truth, one of the closest and most minute observers of English rural life; his methods remind one very much of those of the famous Selborne parson, but he has this great advantage, that in these days far more is known of his subject than in Gilbert White's time, especially where migratory birds are concerned. Since the end of the eighteenth century the world has been opened up and ransacked; we know, for the most part, where the legions of our feathered visitants retire to, when they quit our shores in autumn, or pass by us in spring; we know their nesting-places, and what far regions they traverse in those vast journeys which are still the wonder and the puzzle of modern naturalists. In Gilbert White's day almost nothing of the sort was known.

Mr. Robinson is not only a most indefatigable observer and recorder of Nature; he has an advantage over many of his fellows in being a stylist whose writings have a clear note of distinction of their own. In the present book we make bold to believe he has produced one of the most valuable and delightful chronicles of the country ever yet written. Day by day, from January 1st to December 31st, he has jotted down some sign and symptom of the passing year. Open the book where you may, you are certain to find some clear-cut cameo, expressed so admirably and so succinctly that the interest of the subject is enhanced tenfold. Here is a passage picked at random from hundreds of others. It is for April 11th: "The swallow, whose gold-fringed catkins now spread one of the year's great feasts for honey-seeking insects, tosses its studded wands idly, for even the assiduous hive-bee can hardly hold her own against the gusts which carry her away from the swaying blossoms. And where are the hosts of moths, the furred and beplumed guests of the swallow at night, whose eyes should gleam like opals in the light of the collector's lantern? Here and there a weather-worn survivor from last autumn clings, with the grim courage of a veteran, to some more sheltered spray, foraging for his last campaign of life; but, for the gay throng of spring's young revellers, the 'moths of the season,' you may search the swallow blossom vainly when April winds are chill." Every page of this book—which, by the way, has some good illustrations—teems with little pictures of this kind, dealing with the ways of some bird, beast, or insect, some quaint phenomenon of the open air. It is a wonderful record, arrived at with amazing knowledge, and put before the reader with consummate skill. This book, which ought to be, and no doubt will be, on the shelves of every Nature-lover, whether in town or country, has certainly a future. It is the sort of volume a man can pick up on a day of lowering clouds, or drifting rain, or opaque, yellow, urban fog, and solace himself with. It will refresh many a jaded town-dweller and amuse and interest many a man of the open air, who, alas! too often knows far less of the details and minutiae of the wild life about him than he would care to confess.

"Far and Near" (Constable and Co.) bears the name of an author almost as well known among Nature-lovers in England as in his own country of America. The author of books such as "Winter Sunshine" is always welcome. Years ago, while pursuing great game in the African wilderness, the writer of this article travelled with a very attenuated library. Among his half-dozen books was a copy of John Burroughs' "Winter Sunshine," a little work which afforded infinite pleasure time and again to two men occasionally jaded with the hardships of a hunter's life. No man has done so much in the United States, during the last three decades, towards interesting his fellow-countrymen in the pure and simple pleasures of Nature, in the life of birds, the great woods and hills, the well-flowered clearing, and the sparkling brook. Mr. Burroughs' hand has lost nothing of its cunning, and the reader will find in this volume many a charming picture and much interesting lore. The first half of the volume deals with "Green Alaska"; in the second portion the author returns to his beloved home by the Hudson River, and gives us some delightful pictures of bird-life. Few writers on Nature have a more captivating pen than John Burroughs'.

Our third volume, "Birds I have Known" (Fisher Unwin), is by Mr. A. H. Beavan. This is a type of book which can be confidently recommended to boys. It deals, and on the whole deals very pleasantly, with birds of the author's childhood and



W. A. Geale.

## AN ANCIENT HALL.

"WHERE HANG  
THE ANTLERED TROPHIES OF THE CHASE."

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schooldays, passes on to oceanic, Australasian, and South American birds, and winds up with birds in Cornwall. It is not an ambitious volume, but it is just the kind of book to lay hold of a schoolboy's mind, and lead him to better things than stoning frogs or chevying cats. The illustrations might certainly have been better; they are by no means up to date. H. A. B.

## FROM THE FARMS.

### THE UTILITY POULTRY CLUB.

**Y**EAR-BOOKS are extremely fashionable, but till we saw the volume before us, we scarcely thought it would be necessary to publish one for the Utility Poultry Club. However, it is a very interesting document, and, amongst other things, it shows that the club has a balance in hand at the bank, which speaks well for its economical management. The register of breeds included in it gives particulars of the strain and other information about no fewer than 1,000 entries. We notice, too, that the membership of the club has increased by 375 during the last year, and now numbers 1,100. The poultry-keeper will find it very useful, if no more than from the fact that it gives hints as to what is to be done in each of the various months of the year.

### THE DEMAND FOR SHORTHORNS.

Evidence is constantly being afforded of the widespread and increasing demand for first-rate pedigree shorthorns, and those who breed them ought to derive much encouragement from recent sales. For example, at the last Perth sale the average price realised for 229 bulls was £49 19s. 11d., or just a penny less than £50 a piece, as compared with the not unsatisfactory average of £36 13s. 3d. last year. Some of the more expensive purchases were those of Mr. Miller, who gave 600 guineas for a bull belonging to Captain Graham Stirling. Mr. McClellan gave 500 guineas for a bull belonging to Mr. Stewart of Millhills; 320 guineas was paid by Mr. Colman, and 350 guineas by Mr. Hulme. The average price obtained by Mr. Hulme was £273, by Captain Graham Stirling £245, and by Mr. Stewart £235. Of course, these were picked animals. Some of the prices given at the ordinary sales were as follows: At the dispenishing sale of Dr. R. W. Gibson the average for the pedigree cows and heifers was £25 2s. 10d., and for bulls £30 10s. 6d.

### THE LAMBING SEASON.

Very mixed reports continue to come to hand about the lambing season. From some flocks it is reported that twins are not very plentiful, and a larger proportion than usual of the ewes have died, though the single lambs are said to be up to a good average. From another farm we hear that the fall of lambs has been unusually large, but so, unfortunately, has also been the number of deaths among them. On the other hand, the reports from various quarters are at least satisfactory, although in none of them has the season been a brilliant one. So far we have been speaking of Hampshires, but very much the same kind of thing has to be recorded concerning Oxfordshires and Southdowns, while Suffolks have not done either better or worse. According to

the reports that we have heard there continues to be on most of the farms a plentiful supply of winter food, consisting for the most part of swedes and seaweed. It will not be very long now before the early spring food comes on, and perhaps the little lambs may rejoice to think that Whit-Sunday is later than usual, so that they have many weeks to play in the sun before they meet the fate of such as are not intended for the show-ring or to replenish the flock.

### THE CHECK TO VEGETATION.

Farmers have very good reason to welcome the little spell of wintry weather. It appeared for a time as though vegetation were in the way of making much too rapid progress, and, indeed, the premonitory signals of spring have already fluttered out like welcoming pennons. That hardy climbing plant, the common honeysuckle, has already developed green leaves on its trailing bines, that clamber over the low woodland bushes and trees. A white carpet of snowdrops shines at the root of the trees, and is prettily reflected in pools of water. Some of the earlier trees are already beginning to bud, and in others the blackness of winter is changing into that soft brown which comes from the swelling of the buds. And seldom have we heard the birds sing so sweetly and so clearly in the February weather. Already they have donned the nuptial garments which Nature sends them for their wedding-day. The rooks and the herons are building their nests, and the wood-pigeon is cooing from the pines. It was all going on merrily till a biting frost came and checked the budding of plants and the love-making of birds. But the only lament of the farmer is that the frost was not quite keen enough. Experience has taught him that later in the season a hard and chilling frost is almost certain to come, and if the buds and blossoms are too premature they are almost certain to be killed by it. Welcome, therefore, was the spell of winter that followed a too early spring; welcome, too, was the rain that on Saturday night and Sunday morning came down in torrents. Not often does it happen that we have to complain of drought in January and February, but it really did happen so this year, and rain never was more welcome at the beginning of a dry summer than it was at the fag end of this winter.

### DAIRY IMPORTATION.

A somewhat curious situation has arisen in regard to the importation of dairy products. We are getting more than the usual quantity from Australia, but the supply in Canada and the United States is a short one, so that there have been a number of shipments of butter from this side over to America. Denmark is feeling the competition very much with Australia, and during the last two months has not been able to equal our Colonial supply, although the price of Danish butter at the present moment is about 5s. per cwt. less than that of Colonial butter. But there can be no reason to doubt that prices will increase in the immediate future, and indeed this is true not only of dairy products, but of all kinds of produce of the land, including wheat. The English farmer has good reason to expect that his labour will meet with a more remunerative return during the coming year than he has received for a long time previously.

## A SOUTH AFRICAN ENTERPRISE.

**I**T is in the late winter months that the Cape peaches and plums arrive in the London markets, just at that time when they can come from practically no other part of the world, and this is one reason why there is a prospect of such an

immense future for Cape fruit farmers. Although the industry is still in growing infancy, there are already several very large South African fruit farms, and many smaller ones, which yearly send to the English winter market larger and more successful shipments of plums, peaches, and grapes. The largest individual farm of all, and probably the most progressive, is that of the Cape Orchard Company at Hex River. By a limited number of Londoners the legend C.O.C. may, perhaps, be read in a few West End fruit shops, stencilled on boxes, or printed on tissue paper fruit-wrappers, or possibly the letters may enter into the early morning jargon of Covent Garden Market; but only for a winter month or two at most. In South Africa is different, and C.O.C. gradually spreading and growing, and simultaneously condensing into a household word. But get out of the train at Hex River and you will find the C.O.C. constitutes a major portion of the atmosphere.



C. Elliott.

ORCHARD SIDING.

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C. Elliott.

PEACH BLOSSOM AND SNOW.

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the place; but only if you get out of the train. Pass through the valley by the up-country mail, and all that will be noticed, amid the desolate splendour of the mountain scenery, will be a collection of corrugated iron buildings at Orchard Siding, a broad richness of orchard land stretching into the veldt, and scattered tree-shaded homesteads and farm-buildings—mostly of cool, white, Dutch architecture. Then the train crawls winding up the wonderful Hex River Pass, "that just divides the desert from the sown," and, leaving behind the sterile fruit land which stretches from Cape Town to de Doorns, enters the Great Karroo in the direction of Cairo.

The Cape Orchard Company was formed in 1902, and in the following year the farm of 3,000 acres was bought. For many years the estate had been in the Devos family, who cultivated about thirty or forty acres, and made wine. The pioneer work of developing which has been carried on since then is a very astounding thing indeed. To-day there are 400 acres under fruit, in all about 65,000 trees, mostly planted 20ft. by 20ft. The vineyards cover another thirty-five acres, cultivated forage land 400 acres, and this last winter 300 acres have been planted with black wattle trees, the bark of which is used for tanning, and the timber for firewood or vine props. These figures can convey but little, so no more of them. Hard work, good British enterprise, and energy, energy, energy, are stamped over the estate. The head and the heart of the whole farm are at the company's own orchard siding by the main line. First the big packing-shed with its offices. Here fruit and farm produce are packed and despatched practically the year round. In winter (South African winter) oranges, potatoes, onions, etc. It is the slack season, and then the visitor may look, breathe, and even ask questions; but for five hot summer months the great three-span shed is a seething turmoil of perfectly methodical chaos. Last season's output was 545 tons of fruit, and the record day's work was fourteen tons, picked, graded, packed, and despatched. The fruit is gathered into boxes and run up from the far ends of the farm on two lines of light railway. Until recently the fruit was graded by hand, but now this work is done by machinery, mysterious machines, infinitely simple, which will take a crop of ripe peaches, and bring them bruiseless, in endless streams, to where the coloured women will pack them; each stream with peaches of a standard size—large, medium, or small. The pretty work of packing is chiefly done by the wives and daughters of the "boys" on the farm. Each fruit is wrapped separately in a sheet of tissue paper, and then packed into its place with wood wool, following which the lids are nailed down by machinery. Next is the work of stencilling, filling in railway consignment notes, declaration

forms, etc., and finally packing away into railway trucks. All this means an enormous amount of work, especially in a temperature which frequently runs up to 107deg. in the shade, and with coolies and "boys," the majority of whom cannot read a word. Moreover, the work is increasing rapidly year by year as fresh orchards come into bearing. At present there are at least a third of the trees which have not borne a fruit, and many more have only just started; and as planting is still being extensively carried on each winter, it is interesting to speculate what it will be like even in the near future.

Close to the packing-shed are the engine-house, jam factory, box factory, and cold-storage chambers. These and the business side of the farm are under the management of Mr. L. M. Dicey, whilst the whole of the outside work, from the time the veldt is cleared and ploughed and the young trees planted until the ripe fruit arrives at Orchard Siding, is under Mr. R. P. Malleson's special care.

Electricity plays an important part in the working of the farm. The offices and packing-shed and most of the dwellings are lit by it. Electricity runs the box-making machine, the cold store, and the jam factory. The power is supplied from the loveliest of mountain streams, two miles away, in Else Kloof, the beauty of which alone might almost justify the starting of a Hex River Scenery Syndicate.

The jam factory and the cold store ran their first season last year, and both give promise of big things. Successions of the finest fruit are kept at a sufficiently low temperature to retard their ripening until they are long out of season; then they are taken out, slowly thawed, and sent to market. The jam factory should prove a valuable outlet for the large quantities of smaller fruit, which, though perfectly sound, so soon create the glut in the market which spoils the price of the finest fruit. The boxes are made in a shed beyond these factories. Here are stacks and stacks of "chunks" of boxwood. They form a perfect labyrinth,



C. Elliott.

THE MIDDLELAND PEAR ORCHARD.

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and in the centre of all is a machine which, turning out its 2,000 boxes a day, has the place pretty much to itself by the end of the season. Away to the right of these buildings runs one of the two lines of light railway, and, after a few hundred yards of veldt, the orchards begin; whilst further still, shady among well-planted trees and garden, is Mr. Malleson's charming home. The house, which is modern, is in that style of architecture best suited to the country, viz., Dutch—white, one-storeyed, red-roofed, and exceedingly picturesque. The surrounding garden is a luxuriant Eden of flowers and fruit, where willows and roses are the chief characteristic. Willows are everywhere; they suggest water, and not falsely, for there are many good water-slots, full of frogs and with oleanders and arums at their banks, and crossed by many little bridges, not fangled bridges, but

always leading one on to fresh masses of roses. Most of the good English flowers are growing in Mrs. Malleson's garden alongside the native bulbs, carnations, violets, daffodils, oaks, bamboos, bananas, nerines, watsonias, and chin-ching-a-ling-chees. In one place is a pond entirely arboured by willows, all festooned with bottle-shaped weaver birds' nests, swinging over the water on the long weeping branches. Beyond the garden and out across a vineyard runs the Hex River, in summer a pretty, docile stream, deeply bordered by tall reed-beds, but swollen to ugly brown floods in the rainy season. The river is crossed at this point by a picturesque, rickety foot-bridge. Tunnelling through the greenery of some supporting



C. Elliott. WATER KLOOF, HEX RIVER. Copyright

willow trees, and so out over the reed-beds and the river, the bridge leads to the great peach orchard of Middleland. The orchards are far from fulfilling Japanese ideals of fruit trees, which are all for the beautiful double-blossomed varieties. At Hex River the fruit blossom is rather disappointing. The peaches and nectarines nearly all have small dingy red flowers, though the few large ones that there are are extremely beautiful seen silhouetted against the late winter snows on the mountain ranges. It is in the fruit season that one comes to despise Japanese worship of the lovely double-blossomed, barren fruit trees.

At present the orchards are too young to be picturesque, and their chief beauty lies in their splendid vigour and clean health, and their chief interest in



C. Elliott. MRS. MALLESON'S GARDEN. Copyright

the enterprise and energy which put them there. The impression to a visitor, not an expert, riding round the farm is one of long vistas, endless perspectives, wheeling past, between rows and rows of fruit trees, crossed here and there by wind-breaks of blue gums or poplars; whilst every where, between and beneath the trees, the soil is ploughed and cultivated, and, when necessary, irrigated by a system of sluits and small streams, which are diverted and led to every spot.

The light railway on this far side of the river follows the main road of the farm, and leads back through prune orchards and across a fine bridge, which the company have built, to the yard, where are Mr. Dicey's old Dutch homestead of Modderdrift, stabling for forty or fifty mules and horses, the company's shop, where most of the necessities of life can be bought in tins, the smithy, the old wine store, and the quarters of the majority of the large white staff. Modderdrift is a splendid specimen of a Dutch farmhouse, heavily shaded by giant oaks, and surrounded by stoep and garden and tennis court, beyond which rise the wild mountains of the Matrouseburg range.

A jolly life and jolly hard work might be the impression of a visitor to the bachelor quarters on the farm. Certainly it is hard work, and in the rush of the fruit season the hours are necessarily long—from sunrise to sunset, or sometimes even later. But fruit will wait for no one. In the off hours there is plenty to do. Tennis, shooting, or mounted drill with the Hex



C. Elliott. ROSES AT MODDERDRIFT, HEX RIVER. Copyright

River trout of the W.L.H., of which Mr. Malleson is the "Skipper," or there are large and wily trout in some of the tributaries of the Hex which come down from the kloofs. These trout were put in by Government, and already apparently know several things about artificial flies. In the evenings there are billiards, whist, or the reading-room. Another possible impression

which the visitor might form would be that fruit-farming meant dancing into the small hours of the morning, and starting for work in the not much larger hours, or working and sleeping, punctuated by eating. It would all depend on the time of year, and the ripening of the fruit; but as an academy of fruit-growing, dancing, and whist, the C.O.C. has yet to be beaten.

CLARENCE ELLIOTT.

## BLACK GROUSE.

**T**HOUGH never found in Ireland, there is hardly a county in Scotland, England, or Wales where the black grouse at one time or another has not been killed; and yet to-day the numbers of this sporting bird are steadily decreasing even in those localities where fifty years ago they were frequently seen in flocks of upwards of a hundred. The causes of this decrease have been voluminously written about, some writers blaming the introduction into and increase of pheasants in what was formerly exclusively the blackcock's habitat, other writers blaming the drainage of the moist uplands, which they aver has done away with those rushy tracts so eagerly sought for by the greyhen in which to make her nest. Others, again, suggest that owing to the introduction of pheasants, the "gapes disease" has been brought into the black game country, which being moist and damp becomes a hotbed for this disease. But, though any or all of these suggestions may be correct, there is certainly a remedy at hand which might be favourably tried, and that is an alteration in the game laws, which at present enable the so-called "sportsman" to massacre the poult on August 20th. What a magnificent bird the old blackcock is as he easily leads a pack of grouse to the butts late on in November; or as he comes swinging over a hillside covert ahead of the rocketing pheasants! And what miserable little creatures are the young brood in August! Lying close as stones, they can only with difficulty be made to rise. The old greyhen goes off reluctantly, and too often falls an easy prey, while the young ones, kicked out of the heather or bracken one by one, are easily disposed of. The old cocks, too, undergoing a very severe moult in August, and often in September, seem to hide their nakedness by sitting close on the rough hillsides, till, with the advent of their plumage, they work down together to the cornfields at the edge of the moor, where they soon learn to look after themselves.

If those who wish to increase their stock of black game made it a rule for the next three seasons not to shoot any till October 1st, the result would, we think, be beneficial. Another great question is whether the greyhens should never be shot. It would be a very bad policy never to allow hen pheasants to be shot in our coverts, and we fail to see why greyhens should be entitled to different treatment. It was supposed that the greyhen was not fertile till three years old, but this by experiment has been found to be erroneous. Of course, if one could pick out the old hens and leave the young, as one can often do till late in the season in the case of the blackcocks, it would be ideal; but though an experienced gunner can often select the darker and larger hen out of a pack, the novice will see very little difference between the old and young till they are lying dead at his feet.

One more suggestion. Just as we should not think of shooting our pheasant coverts once a fortnight, why should we keep nagging away at the black game, making them the sport for the half-day, when the morning's rain has spoiled the prearranged grouse drive or covert shoot? We should shoot our black game two or, perhaps, three times in the season, never before October, taking cock and hen with care the first time over, and never shooting at what we know to be a young bird. Of course, a patch of corn up in the hills near the black game's haunts will gather the birds to it; but

it cannot increase the stock of the country-side, though it may draw our neighbours' birds to us. We must have local co-operation to revive an increase, and, in this respect, landowners would do well to turn their attention to the devastation caused by the rook. This bird, distinguished from his carrion brother (*Corvus corone*) by the classical denomination of frugilegus, has of late years, by his partiality for eggs, nestlings, and young animals, rendered this denomination a patent misnomer. The greyhen nesting on the out-of-the-way hillsides has no worse enemy. Her eggs, laid below some bracken or a tuft of rushes, are barely concealed from the vigilant eye of the rooks, who, having hatched out earlier, hunt the hillsides with their broods with the persistence and regularity of the hen-harrier. Nest after nest may be found with the eggshells sucked dry, and at times one may even find feathers as evidence of a conflict where the old mother has tried to defend her nest from the black marauders.

The young chicks when hatched are delicate little creatures, much prone to pneumonia, to which they speedily succumb. To these the old greyhen is a most careless mother, and ignoring the fact that her power of flight is superior to that of her brood, often lets them wander into deep drains and ditches, where the frequent thunder-showers of May and June soon drown them. The chicks live entirely on insect food, though when they grow older they thoroughly enjoy the various wild berries, and later on visit the

cornfields in large flocks. When the corn is cut and stooked they can often be seen sitting on the sheaves of corn greedily feeding. This habit is made use of by the poacher, who makes a conveniently sized stool in which to hide himself, so that when the birds come and perch above his head, all he has to do is to gently put out his hand and catch the unsuspecting bird by its legs. Occasionally two wooden uprights are driven into the ground, on the top of which is nailed

a board with three or four steel rat-traps or snares set on it. The sheaves are then set up on either side of the board, so that when the birds alight they are caught in the traps, which are hidden by the waving ears of corn. In Siberia, the peasants employ more ingenious traps for catching these birds, which they kill all the year round, to judge by the almost perennial display of black game in the London game-dealers' shops. The black grouse inhabits Scandinavia, Russia, Eastern Holland, Germany, and Central Europe, while in Asia it is found throughout Siberia to as far south as Manchuria. In Great Britain it is found throughout Scotland and the bordering counties of England; also more sparingly in the West and South-west of England; while it is perhaps most numerous in the counties of Dumfries and Roxburgh, though, as has been previously stated, there is hardly a county from Caithness to Cornwall which cannot at one time or another record this bird amongst its avifauna.

The blackcock is polygamous, and in spring they assemble on some grassy knoll, where they indulge in mimic warfare and pantomimic display for the benefit of the greyhens. They resort day after day in the early hours of the morning to the same knoll, which is beaten quite hard by the action of their feet. Here they pirouette, spar, and show off their magnificent plumage to the hens, who sit in the neighbouring trees or on the



GREYHEN'S NEST AND EGGS.

hillside near. With drooping wings, uplifted tails, and flaming cheeks the cocks strut about, uttering their inimitable, gurgling cry, which one may hear on a sunny day late on in the autumn, and which has now been neatly termed "pseudo-erotism." At



GREYHEN ON NEST.

times, two old cocks will make a fight of it, and feathers will fly and blood be shed; but the vanquished soon owns his defeat, and retires to preen his ruffled plumage, postponing his fighting till he can find some less scientific pugilist. The blackcock who proves himself the victor of the arena takes to himself a harem of some five to seven hens, and on these the subsequent incubation of eggs and rearing of chicks entirely devolves. The eggs, six to twelve in number, are laid in a scanty nest of dry grass beneath some ferns or rushes, and take twenty-four days to hatch. Though habitually nesting on the ground, an instance of a greyhen nesting in a tree occurred in Dumfriesshire in 1899. An owl's nest of the preceding year in a spruce fit about 20 ft. from the ground was made use of, in which the greyhen laid nine eggs. The nest was watched, and the day after the eggs were chipped two young birds were found dead below the tree; so the nest, with the remaining young ones, was placed at the foot of the tree, from which, since they disappeared, it is presumed the old bird led them away. When hatched, the chicks are fragile little creatures, clothed in yellow down, with reddish brown patches above their primitive wings, and markings of black on their backs and heads. By August 20th the males show signs of adult plumage, and by October closely resemble the birds of the preceding year, though they still retain a white patch on the throat, have more brown about the head, and lack the beautifully-curved tail. It is not, in fact, till the third season that this latter takes its peculiar lyre-shaped form in perfection, nor, indeed, till then does the black plumage have its full metallic lustre. It is noteworthy that greyhens, assuming the plumage of the male, always have the white spot on the throat symbolical of the young blackcock; and, although their tails become forked, the remainder of their plumage, beyond becoming darker and interspersed with grey feathers, does not undergo much change. Blackcocks with the white under-parts of their tails barred with black (occasionally to the exclusion of the white colour) are examples of melanism, and are by no means rare. No game-bird is known to have inter-bred more freely with other species than the black grouse, and hybrids are recorded from the capercailzie, pheasant, grouse, willow-grouse, common fowl, and bantam. Only last year (1904) it was recorded in a contemporary that three hybrids between a blackcock and red grouse had been bred in captivity at Scampston in Yorkshire, though they were unfortunately very short lived; and in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society for August, 1904, can be found a detailed description of a hybrid between a greyhen and a willow-grouse. Experiments in hand-rearing black game have not in our experience proved successful, during the last seven seasons only some 20 per cent. of birds having been reared to the gun. The chief cause of mortality would seem to be lung trouble. For the first week or so the chicks look as healthy as one could wish; but of a sudden they droop, and, though every remedy is tried, they seem to lose all interest in life and die. Nowadays the bags of black game obtained thirty or forty years ago seem almost incredible, when it is remembered that muzzle-loading guns were still in vogue. Eleven guns shooting with His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, at Glenwharrie in Lanarkshire on October 4th, 1869, killed 247 black game in the day's driving; and, turning over the leaves of the Drumlanrig game-book, one reads of many days when over three figures were

killed. But of recent years the diminution everywhere has been steady, and a bag of twenty-five brace in any part of Great Britain would now be marked as a red-letter day.

Such is our account of the black grouse—birds dating far back in our annals of British sport; for there is no doubt that they are the birds referred to which we read of as "grows" in an ordinance for the regulation of the Royal household, dated "Apud Eltham, mens. Jan., 22 Hen. VIII." (i.e., 1531), and it would be sad indeed were they to become extinct in our British Isles. Though we can scarcely hope to see a blackcock and a hansom cab with the same *coupe d'ail* as Mr. J. G. Millais claims to have seen, we hope and trust that, where he still exists, this noble bird will in the near future receive more considerate treatment at the hands of the agriculturist, the sportsman, and the legislator.

## IN THE GARDEN.

### ANNUAL FLOWERS—THE TIME OF SEED-SOWING

THE time of seed-sowing has set in, and if the orders for the kinds it is proposed to sow have not been sent in, there must be no further delay. The gardener is wise who sows at the right moment, and does not delay doing this and that until the proper time for the work has passed. Gardening is a recreation or business, whichever it may be, that must be carried out methodically. A few days' delay in sowing means that the plants do not flower until later in the year, and we all know the disadvantage of this in a climate such as ours, when perhaps an early autumn frost will destroy plants in their full blossoming. It is for this reason the writer keeps a gardening diary, jotting down the work to be done each day, and there is no departure from the rule, unless, of course, the soil is not in condition. To sow when the ground is wet and sticky is to court failure, but the first fine day must not go by without committing the seeds to the ground. The condition of the soil should be what is known as " friable," that is, break up freely in the hand without staining it much, and then the seeds germinate strongly, and develop quickly afterwards. A great and common evil is sowing too thickly. As a rule twice as much seed is sown as is necessary for the raising up of a profitable crop, or the production of a bountiful display of flowers. The reason should be obvious; but years of preaching seem to have little effect, and in the summer the usual complaint is, " My plants are so weakly and flowerless—will you tell me what is the matter?" Reply, "The result of overcrowding in the seed-bed." A seedling, when given its proper allowance of space, shows its natural form of growth, unrestricted by jostling neighbours, and a long and beautiful season of flowers is the reward. The same applies to all vegetable crops—to Peas, Potatoes, Carrots, Onions, Turnips, and even to fruit trees. Without a free allowance of the beneficent sunshine and gentle, life-giving rain, vegetation cuts a sorry figure, whether it is on the farm or in the garden. Another word of advice to the amateur is not to select too many kinds. A few beautiful annuals give infinitely greater pleasure than a mere collection, unless, of course, this is desired.

### A FEW BEAUTIFUL ANNUAL FLOWERS.

The China Aster in its till, branching forms is very charming, and is in the nature of a rebuke to those who persist in dwarfing the plant into a little bundle of blossom—a tiny dumpling squat on the soil, without a vestige of grace or natural beauty. It is for this reason the species that is, the original China Aster (*A. sinensis*), is thrusting aside the varieties which have come from it. This Aster is tall, 2 ft. or more, leafy, and with a large single purple flower of great beauty. A bed of it is an imposing summer picture in the garden, and it has sufficient strength to stand erect even when heavy storms of rain try to beat down the handsome stems. The larger Marigolds have a homely look, and the colouring is intense, but they have this defect—a desire to overrun the garden. *Calliopsis grandiflora* *atrosanguinea*, Canary creeper (*Tropaeolum canariense*)—one of the quickest in growth of all annual climbers; *Celosias* (to be sown at once in heat); the Cornflowers, best of all the ordinary blue; *Chrysanthemum tricolor*, *Clarkia Salmon Queen*, *Cosmos*, a graceful autumn-flowering annual. Sow now in gentle warmth the Chinese Pinks, which were recently described in COUNTRY LIFE; *Phacelia campanularia*, the bluest of blue annuals (most successful on a warm soil); Poppies, not forgetting the beautiful Shirley forms; *Salpiglossis* in variety, Sweet Peas, Sweet Sultan, French and African Marigolds, *Virginia Stock*, *Viscaria cardinalis*, *Eschscholtzia* (these are very charming in poor soil), *Eutoca viscidula*, *Gaillardia picta*, *Godetias*, *Gypsophila elegans*, a very graceful and pretty annual, which should be sown in succession once in every three months; Sunflowers, not omitting the semi-coloured Primrose Dame, *Ionopsidium*, a pretty little carpeting plant, just the flower for a bed; *Limnanthes Douglasii*, a favourite of bees, and for that reason should be sown freely near the hives; *Linum grandiflorum rubrum*, *Lupins*, *Malope grandiflora*, *Lavatera trimestris*, a lovely annual flower of warm rose colouring, and sufficiently tall and branching to make quite a hedge of; *Mignonette*, *Nasturtiums*, *Nemophila insignis*, the sweet-scented *Tobacco Nicotiana affinis* and the taller *N. sylvestris*, the new crimson-flowered *N. Sanderae*, *Verbenas*, *Pilox Drummondii*, and the new *Nigella Miss Jekyll*, which is an annual for all gardens. Its blue colouring is intensely rich, and the flowers lose nothing in grace through their large size. This is not a large selection, but even this list might be reduced. Large beds of *Phlox Drummondii* remain in beauty for many months, and the colours are strong and refined.

## RANDOM NOTES.

*A Beautiful Winter-flowering Heath.*—We were reminded of the beauty of *Erica mediterranea hybrida*, which was raised by crossing the *Mediterranea* Heath and *E. carnea*, by a group of it at a recent meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society, when it was given an award of merit. In the chapter on "The Heaths" in "Trees and Shrubs for English Gardens," page 211, occurs the following reference to this hybrid: "When the whole group is grown, one or more species may be had in flower every month in the year, except, perhaps, November. A hybrid between *E. mediterranea* and *E. carnea* (sold under the name of *mediterranea hybrida*) has been seen much of late, and is a very welcome little shrub, flowers appearing in some years even in November. Every year some expand before Christmas, and during January it is the brightest plant in the outdoor garden. *E. carnea* and the white variety follow it; then in a cluster come *E. australis*, *E. arborea*, *E. lusitanica* (*codonodes*), *E. mediterranea* and its several varieties, which fill up the months from March to May; and from June onwards we have *E. cinerea*, *E. ciliaris*, *E. Mackaii*, *E. scoparia* (the least worthy of the Heaths), *E. stricta*, and *E. Tetralix*. The two allied species, *E. vagans* and *E. multiflora*, carry on the Heath season until October. The Heaths are happiest in a peaty soil. The great Heath nurseries are all on soil of that nature, but it is not essential. A loamy medium can, by adding leaf-mould, and, if necessary, sand, be made to suit all the Heaths, and some, such as

*E. cinerea* and *E. mediterranea*, are quite at home on a calcareous soil. Choose positions for them well exposed to the sun, with, if possible, a cool, moist bottom. The ways of planting vary, of course, according to the character of the species and varieties selected."

*The Blue Coleus.*—This beautiful plant is rapidly becoming quite common in English gardens. Its flowers are of the clearest blue, a pure and pretty Forget-me-not colour, and they appear in winter and the early spring, when they are much appreciated. We have long regarded the Coleus simply as a foliage plant, but in this case the species is remarkable for the flowers. It is a native of British Central Africa, and first flowered at Kew in 1898. Many extensive groups of it have been shown recently at the meetings of the Royal Horticultural Society.

*The First Daffodil.*—The earliest Daffodil of the year is *Narcissus pallidus precox*, and a few blooms on our table are a reminder of its soft sulphur colouring and pretty shape. It is unfortunately one of the most troublesome of its race to establish in the garden, as the bulbs seem to die out very quickly, even in deep loamy soils, which are supposed to agree with the Daffodil family in general. The writer has a little drift of the flowers running like a flowering rill through an orchard, and the result is a perennial joy whilst the colouring remains fresh and bright. We believe this Daffodil was found wild by Mr. Peter Barr in Spain many years ago. Whoever discovered it has the thanks of all flower-lovers.



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REFLECTED GLORY OF THE SKY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

## WINTER FISHING IN THE AVON.

THE Greeks do not seem to have been scientific anglers. They preferred more wholesale methods with a net. And this is a pity, because, had they been anglers, they would have invented such a nice special god to look after the anglers' interests. Had there been any such god, we should undoubtedly have to say that he had taken the fair county of Hampshire under his very special care, and might even have blamed him that one patch of country should be favoured so peculiarly. There are the Test and the Itchen, and what they mean we all know—the most delicately beautiful work that ever falls to the angler's hand to do. And, besides these two, with their tributaries, there is the majestic Avon, in some respects more highly favoured than either even of them. On the Avon there is not required quite the same subtly skilful science as on those streams that come from the pure chalk, but there is so rich a variety in the quarry that it offers to the angler, it is in itself so bountiful a river, passing through a country of such beauty, carrying salmon that are renowned, if not for their number, for their size, and, besides, so rich in the coarse fish, which, if they are on a plane below the splendid

salmon and the trout, are capable of giving very good sport when the game fish are out of season, that on the whole no other English river is its equal.

Possibly the most beautiful stretch of all the Avon is that which goes down past Ringwood and the Avon Castle Hotel, but the illustrations that are shown with this article are of a reach of the river some three miles or so below this, on what is called the Bisterne water. The day of this fishing enterprise was clear and frosty, and the surface of the river, as the illustrations show, of almost too glassy a stillness to offer the best anticipations of sport. The date was the end of January of this year, and clearly then the coarse fish would be the quarry of the moment. None other except the grayling, if there were any, could be in season. Pike and perch were the special objects of the expedition, and in catching these rascals you have the double satisfaction of thinking not only that you are obtaining fish that are far better eating than those who have not tried them, or who know nothing about their proper cookery, are at all ready to admit, but also fish that are a very scourge of the waters to the less cannibalistic kinds. Pike, to be sure, are

[March 4th, 1905.]

worst of all, but the perch are only a degree behind them in destructive voracity, and perhaps their appetite for the carnage of their kind is only limited by their smaller bulk and swallow, and by their relative slowness of movement in the water. The perch is about the only fish that the pike himself does not much care to make a meal off. The young of his own kind he will devour with far more relish; but the perch has a defensive armour of spikes that does not seem comfortable even to the leathern jaws and carnivorous teeth of the pike. These spikes may give you cause to go to work with caution when the perch has gorged the bait and there is trouble in getting it out of his internal depths, for he knows their use well, and can set them all out on end like the fur on the back of an angry cat. The stillness of the water is well seen in the picture showing the setting off down stream, the reflections hardly outlined and the wave of the punt's movement alone breaking the mirror-like surface. Nevertheless, a fair day's bag was made of eight pike totalling 58lb. weight, and sixteen perch weighing 27lb. The eight best of these perch have been set up in a case, making, with the illustrations, a rather unusually complete record of the occasion. It may be seen that the impedimenta and engines included the bait-can for the live bait, and doubtless this live baiting is a cold-blooded business which revolts some hypersensitive souls.

There is all reason, however, to think that the lively dace, or whatever the small fish may be (the dace, perhaps, is the most attractive of all to the pike), impaled by the hook as lightly as can possibly be consistent with security, feels but an infinitesimal



W. A. Rouch.

OFF DOWN STREAM.

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THE PERCH HAS GORGED THE BAIT.

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thrill of pain in comparison with the feelings of the angler if he were treated likewise. To hold any other faith would be to charge Nature with a cruelty too diabolical, for the multitudinous suffering inflicted by the pike and perch on the little fish that they gobble up, and still more, perhaps, on the little fish that escape them after a snap, must in that supposition be fearful to contemplate. In any case, the man of tender conscience may herein see a means of reconciling to his sense of mercy and of ethical justice such pain as he may inflict on the fish used as bait, for it is sure that there is no lure to compare with the live bait in its attraction for the pike, especially in water as still as this that we are fishing on in fancy now, and no less sure that the death of the

eight pike caught this day must mean the salvation from suffering of unnumbered little fishes for which those used as bait have, as it were, been offered in sacrifice.

It is not to be claimed for this fishing that it requires anything like the skill of the casting of the fly for the trout on the Test or Itchen. It is "chucking and chancing." Nevertheless, there is some measure of skill required in casting the live bait out just to the right place, and so quietly that it will land gently and not scare the pike too greatly; for though they are bold, voracious fish, there is a limit to the disturbance that they will stand, and the clear water makes disturbance the more disturbing. Neither is it all chance, but rather a matter of some knowledge, to throw into the spots where the pike are most likely to be lying in wait for prey. This is a point on which your skilled professional assistant, with his local knowledge of the river, becomes so valuable. He will tell you the hole in which a big pike always lies; and always, as it



W. A. Rouch.

IMPEDIMENTA.

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is apt to seem to you, unless you are very adept at casting accurately, this will be under a bank, and under an over-growing bush that does its best to catch up your tackle.

There is a peculiar element of excitement in this live-bait fishing for the pike, from the eccentric action of the bait when it becomes conscious of the pike in its neighbourhood. Hither and thither it carries your float, and gives you quick thrills of responsive sensation. Once—twice it seems to elude the pike, whose rushes you may even see raising a wave on the level surface of the river; then the pike has him. Give the fish law a moment, to gorge the bait; then strike him with a long, steady pull rather than a jerk, which will send the barbed hook home in his hard mouth. The struggle is sharp, but it is short. Gimp, rather than gut, which the teeth of the pike would sever, is likely to be your cast, and you will have it



W. A. Rouch.

CASTING THE LIVE BAIT.

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seem as if a fly had to be going into convulsions (for of course it must have a most unusual aspect when a trout is fighting hard for liberty at the end of the cast to which it is attached) for a perch to be really attracted by it. The nuisance was so considerable that I had to give up fishing with a second fly on the cast, so that the trout should have it all to himself; for the landing of a two-pounder trout was not made more easy by the attachment of a pound perch to the bob-fly.

On this Avon day, however, with the water and sky clear as crystal, there could be obviously no chance with such a lure as the fly. The gudgeon or the artificial minnow might serve—for choice the former; and they have the merit, too, that besides the perch, for which you may be specially fishing them, they may have almost as good a chance of arousing the notice of a hungry pike, for whom the fly would have no delights at all; and the uncertainty of the kind and size of the fish that you may



W. A. Rouch.

A LIKELY HOLE FOR PIKE.

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strong enough. The hook does not often wear out of the tough jaw of a pike. He will fight hard for a minute, but he will not keep the struggle up with the gameness of a salmon. Soon you may draw him in and gaff him or net him into the boat.

Perch are funny fish. You may try a gudgeon for them if you like—there is no better bait—and spinning a Devon minnow is deadly for them, too; but for the greatest certainty of all for capturing them, if only it could be contrived without outside help, commend me to the bob-fly on a cast of two or three when a trout, or any other fish you please, has taken the tail-fly. Over and over again, fishing in a lake where there were both trout and perch, I have been worried to distraction when trying to land a trout by a perch attaching himself to the bob-fly. And yet you might cast over them again and again in the ordinary way and would very seldom get a rise from them. It would

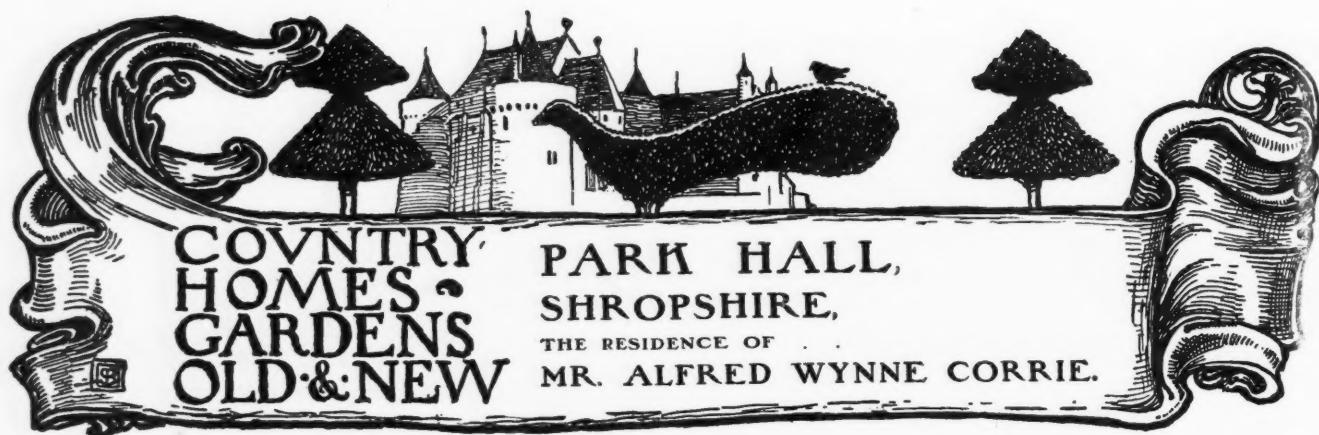
take is surely one of the finest joys of angling. It is, above all, a joy that you may find on the noble Hampshire Avon.



W. A. Rouch.

TRY A GUDGEON FOR PERCH.

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THE old houses of England have necessarily many domestic features in common, be they lofty or lowly, castle or cottage; but the more we see of them, the more clearly do we recognise that they owe their character almost as much to locality as to the age in which they were built. And this is true notwithstanding the prevalence of general types, as seen, for example, in the frowning fortress, with barbican, portcullis, and machicolation, or in the spacious buildings of later times, looking out to the world that surrounds. There is the contrast between the Border mansion, with its strong tower or peel, and the house of its time pleasantly placed in a peaceful shire of the South; a contrast also between the individualities of the mellow red brick of East Anglia, the stone of the North and West, and the timber-work of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Shropshire. Now, Park Hall, near Oswestry, with its picturesque frontage of fine timber construction, bears the character of its locality, and also of peaceful days, though it stands in the very borderland where many a fierce struggle had taken place between English barons and the men who followed the Red Dragon of Wales. And, as a contrast of time and

circumstance, and also of locality, we find the house standing guarded, as it were, by two ancient strongholds of solid masonry—those of Oswestry and Whittington, which belonged to the outer line. At the time of the Domesday survey, but two strong fortresses had risen upon the Welsh Border—Oswestry and Montgomery; but castle-building began with the rebellion of Robert de Bellesme, the last Norman Earl of Shrewsbury, and was continued by the barons who guarded the western frontier of Shropshire against the inroads of the Welsh. The line of these ancient defences was double, the western chain including Overtown, Chirk, Whittington, Oswestry, Kinnerley, Alberbury, Montgomery, Clun, and several more; and the inner, or eastern, chain the castles of Whitchurch, Ellesmere, Ruyton, Shrawardine, Stretton, and Brampton Bryan.

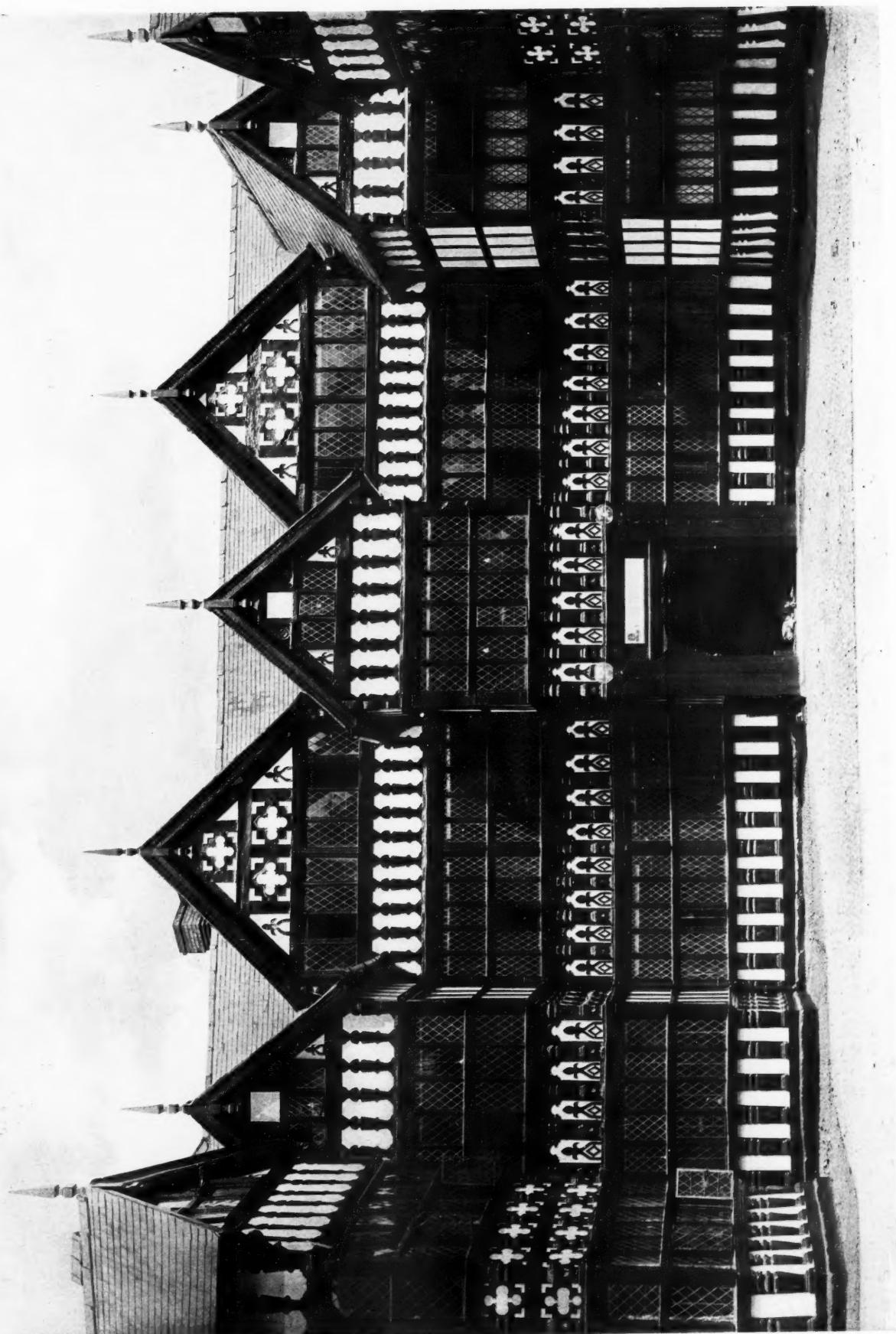
Park Hall, the beautiful sixteenth-century house we depict, belongs to far different times. Yet its name takes us back to the great castle of Whittington, the residence of the feudal family of Fitzwarren, one of whom was a baron of the Magna Charta, and whose members, by the name of Fulk, succeeded one another in the possession for ages. The Park, as the name implies, was



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THE EAST WING.

"COUNTRY LIFE"



"COUNTRY LIFE."

PARTS OF THE SOUTH FRONT.



"COUNTRY LIFE."

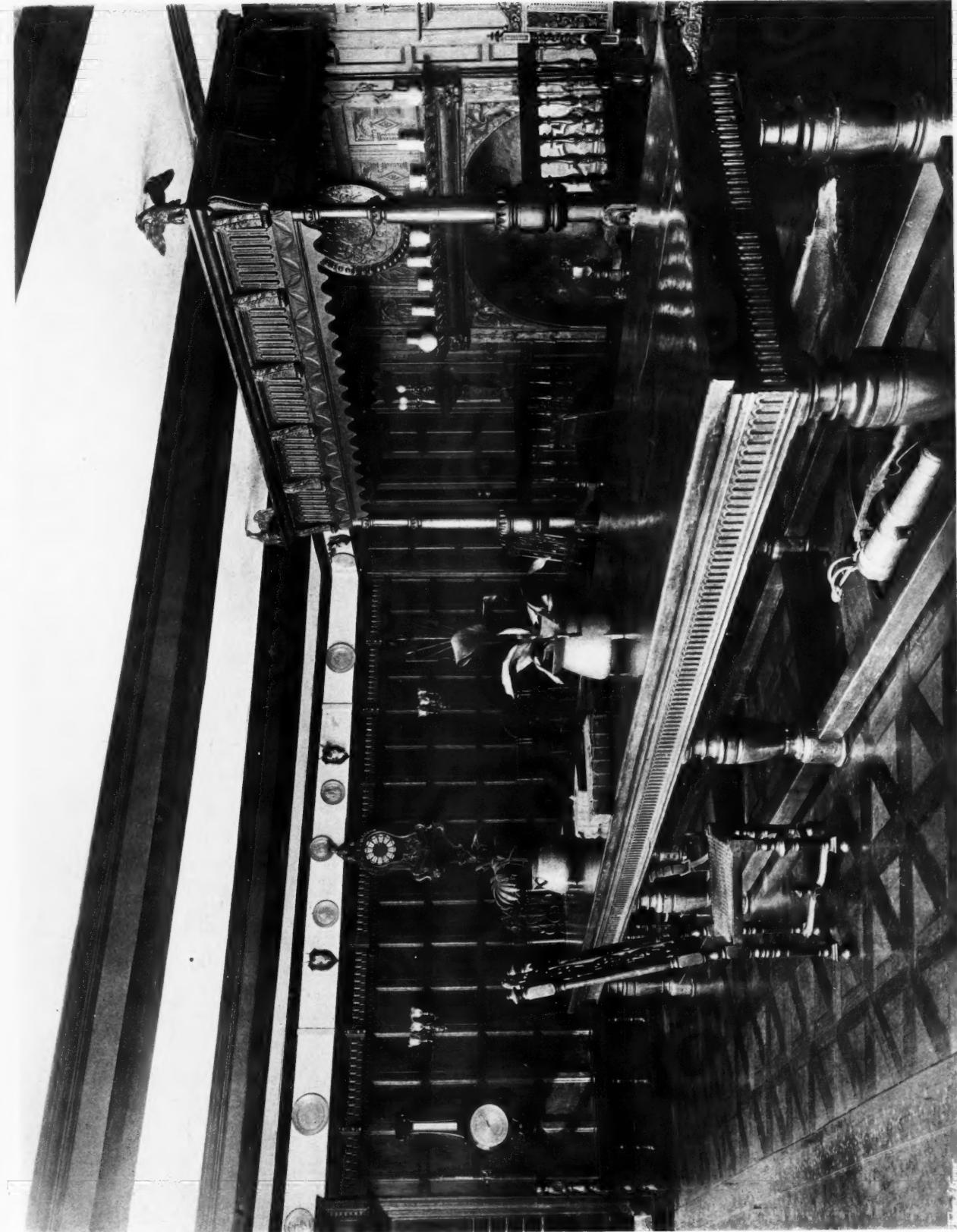
THE OLD DINING-ROOM.

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COUNTRY LIFE.

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THE ENTRANCE-HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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the parkland attached to the demesne of Whittington Castle, which in later times passed to the great Shropshire family of Fitzalan; and in 1563 the Earl of Arundel, last of the Fitzalan surname, joined with his son-in-law, Lord Lumley, and Lady Lumley, his daughter, in selling Park to Thomas Powell of Whittington, Esq. This gentleman, who built Park Hall in the reign of Elizabeth, added to his estate, by buying in 1571 other lands from one William Albany, citizen of London, who had speculated largely in the purchase of the Shropshire estates of the Fitzalans. It has been stated that the house was erected by Robert ap Howell, "of the town of Oswestry, draper," who died about 1541; but this is uncertain and improbable. Blakeway gives the family a descent from the junior branch of the royal line of Powis. However this may have been, the Welsh patronymic of Ap Howell had been Anglicised when the builder of Park Hall came into possession of the property. For many generations his descendants lived in the beautiful mansion, and Robert Powell of Park adhered to the Parliament in the Civil War, and was

we deal with its later history or internal character, let us describe its exterior, which, with its variety of gables and gables, pinnacles and chimneys, bay and oriel windows, plain and quatrefoil timbering, excellence of grouping and artistic character, is particularly admirable. It belongs to the age of mottoes, devices, and apt classic or moral apothegms, of which several may be seen in various parts of the structure. Thus, over the doorway of the porch may be read:

"Quod tibi fieri non vis  
Alteri ne feceris."

The very quaint and picturesque chapel at the south-west angle is a remarkable structure, said to have been consecrated by Archbishop Parker, though of this there is no record. Over the doorway in the interior is the text, "Petra et Ostium Christus est." The chapel is panelled and ceiled with oak, and has a small gallery, which is entered from the house. The whole southern façade of the house, with its black and white timber and plaster construction, is remarkably quaint and attractive. When Sir Francis Charlton bought the place, it had a summer-



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THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

sheriff of the county in 1647. He was succeeded by his son, Robert Powell, D.D., chancellor and canon of St. Asaph, rector of Whittington, and parson of Hodnett—an old pluralist who was also spoken of as "esquire," so that perhaps we may best describe him as a "squarson," in the cant phrase of two centuries ago. His son Thomas Powell, recorder of Oswestry, who was removed from his office because he absented himself from his duties, was the last of the family to possess Park Hall. There is in existence a letter from Charles Knife, who had married his daughter, which depicts him in a very unfavourable light. It appears that he had overawed his children, and, at length, bringing a mysterious stranger with papers for them to sign, as he alleged in relation to the sale of estates in Derbyshire, he fraudulently procured their signatures to a document which betrayed them out of their inheritance. There seems to have been some truth in these statements, for though Sir Francis Charlton purchased the house and estates in 1717, for the sum of £10,500, he had to raise £3,000 in 1728 to pay off Powell's mortgages.

The house he bought, with its "yards, orchards, outhouses, etc.," covering twelve acres, with much farm land, was a very excellent example of a country gentleman's house; and before

house and a raised terrace, a pigeon-house and a gatehouse; and there was a remarkable sundial, including not less than seven dials, on the terrace, dated 1578, with the words, "Tempori Pare," "Tempus omnium parens," and "Tempus edax rerum." On the back was a remarkable set of twelve adonic verses, which were as follows, the beautiful rendering being by Mr. Stanley Leighton, M.P., who has written some notes on the families which lived at Park Hall:

|                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| "Præterit ætas.    | The cycle is passing.       |
| Nec remorante.     | The ages no more.           |
| Lapsa recedunt.    | Return in their courses.    |
| Sæcula cursu.      | The same as before.         |
| Ut fugit ætas.     | As passes the cycle.        |
| Utque citatus.     | As sure and as fast.        |
| Turbinis instar.   | Is rolled by the year.      |
| Volvitur annus.    | As the breath of the blast. |
| Sic quoque nostra. | And so too my own life.     |
| Præcipitanter.     | Grows less unto me.         |
| Vita recedit.      | As the tide wave returns.   |
| Ocyor undis.       | To the depths of the sea."  |

Later on there came inevitable changes, and ultimately sale, so that the terrace and sundial disappeared, and the pigeon-



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THE OAK STAIRWAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright

THE SOUTH-WEST CORNERS WITH THE CHAPEL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

house and gatehouse as well; but the inscription on the dial is worth recording here, and perhaps of being reproduced elsewhere. Before Sir Francis Charlton's time the house had already been reconstructed, and probably to him may be attributed some of the adornments. The splendid plaster ceiling of the dining-room, with Neptune riding the waves, belongs to about this time, and is a very remarkable example of the skill probably of some Italian craftsman. The carved mantel-piece, with double Ionic columns and adornments, harmonises well with the rich panelling and the splendid old furniture of the room. Much care has gone to the restoration and beautifying of the house, which has latterly received some enlargement; but nothing interferes with the old-world charm of the interiors. The entrance-hall is even more impressive than the dining-room. The low, beamed ceiling, the excellent panelling of the walls, the restored fireplace, canopied and enriched, and the grand old table, all are features of this beautiful interior. We believe the table bears the date 1581, and its proportions are those of all old tables that remain. The top is formed of a single plank of oak, 20ft. long, 4ft. wide, and 2½in. thick, and there are the customary foot-rails. The character of this fine interior is admirably rendered in the picture. Through an archway at the further end is seen the stair-

case, which is also illustrated. It is an admirable piece of work, with a very heavy balustrade and magnificent carved newel-posts. The antique oak carving is particularly rich at Park Hall, and the mantel-piece in the drawing-room, which is seen in one of the pictures, is another illustration of its quaintness of character. The *dresseoir* or side-board, dated 1651, which is also depicted, is an exceedingly interesting example of Jacobean carved work.

With this fine estate and beautiful house Sir Francis Charlton endowed his son Job Charlton, but the latter gentleman and his brother Francis died unmarried, and Park passed to the third husband of their sister, John Kinchant or Quinchant, whose father had been killed at Fontenoy, fighting on the English side, and who belonged to a Huguenot family which had come over to England at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. A very interesting inventory of the contents of Park Hall was taken at the death of Job Charlton in 1761, in which mention is made of 105 pictures and 79 portraits hanging in the staircase, the passages, and even in the servants' hall. The ancient single-plank long-table, now in the hall, is also in the list, valued at the modest price of £2 2s. The chapel had been converted into a gunroom, and contained blunderbusses, pistols, and other objects. The rooms mentioned are: three



THE CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.



Copyright

THE DINING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

parlours, library (without books), hall, gallery, chapel, five best bedrooms, men's garret with five beds, maids' garret, pantry, housekeeper's room, servants' hall, closets for linen and china, and wine, ale, and beer cellars; and there were brewhouses, a larder, a salting cellar, stables, a summer-house, and a gatehouse. Curiously enough, no mention is made of the dining-room.

John Kinchaint, who became possessed of Park Hall in right of his wife, was a captain in the 32nd Regiment. His son, John Charlton Kinchaint, dying unmarried, and his nephew, Francis Kinchaint, who was next heir, a gallant cornet of the Scots Greys, being killed at Waterloo, the estate passed to the latter's sister. This lady married the Rev. John Langley, and the estate afterwards came to Mr. Richard Henry Kinchaint, sheriff of Shropshire.



Copyright

ANTIQUE CARVING.

"C.L."

(1846), who died in 1864. This gentleman's son and daughter having died abroad, the mortgagees sold the property about 1870 to Mrs. Wynne Corrie.

Such has been the descent of this interesting Shropshire mansion. Many changes have necessarily passed over it during the long period since it was built. Much work seems to have been done in or about the year 1640, and a good deal of the fine interior carving belongs to that period. Again, perhaps half a century later, new skill was involved to enrich and beautify the house. In the hands of the Charltons and Kinchants it was generally well cared for, and at one time it was the residence of the Hon. Mrs. Stapleton-Cotton. Some signs of decay fell upon it, and at the sale many things were dispersed. Now in the hands of Mr. Wynne Corrie it has gained a new lease of its existence, and the additions and changes which have been made have been effected all in a reverent spirit. The house has become commodious and comfortable, and within and without it is a mansion of very excellent and original character.

## A FISHERMAN WITH . . . HIS EYES OPEN

**J**UST how much of himself Mr. Geen intended to reveal to us in his handsome volume, "What I Have Seen While Fishing, and How I Have Caught My Fish," which is concerned chiefly with things fishy, is not certain, but what is sure is that he has revealed himself considerably, and that the revelation is an extremely pleasant one. Of all

the many illustrations from photographs with which the book is enlivened, the best of all, perhaps, is that of the author, which serves as frontispiece, and takes us into his confidence at once; it is so eloquent of the sympathy, the humour, and the optimism which the book further discovers. Mr. Geen's claim to speak as an angler may be gathered, by those who require to be told open secrets about fishing affairs, from the fact that for twenty-seven years he has been president of the Anglers' Association. In the introductory chapter he is more than sufficiently modest in disclaiming any literary ability to put what he has to say on paper, for his writing reveals descriptive and narrative power adequate for making the tale of much duller facts go pleasantly. A large portion, and the chief portion, of his book is concerned with fishing on the West Coast of Ireland, and not with the fishing alone. At the outset Mr. Geen proclaims himself, with just pride, a native of Devon, and submits that this birthright gives him an appreciation and sympathy with the Celtic nature that is not given to all, and a faculty to woo from the Western Irishman (and woman) their secret stores of superstition and of humorous anecdote. He makes the subtle remark, too, that the Irishman does not really "give himself away" to the stranger as freely as he seems to, in spite of his air of "forthcoming." Even the reserved Scot Mr. Geen judges to keep his real counsel scarcely so strictly guarded, although the outward manner of the Irish gives so much more promise of candour. So the book ranges along the West Coast of Ireland, with vivid and appreciative description of scenery and anecdote, chiefly humorous, but occasionally pathetic, and everything is of rose colour. It is here that we stop a moment and enter a protest of distrust of Mr. Geen's invincible optimism. All was too delightful. It is delightful in Mr. Geen to find it so—never to find a West Irish hotel uncomfortable, noisy, dirty. We delight in reading this,



PARK HALL: A JACOBEAN SIDEBOARD.

but do we not for a moment suspect him, too, to be a little akin by his inheritance of birth in a Western land, to these Irishmen who are so delightfully candid in manner and yet, perhaps, do not "give it all away"? At least, we stand with suspended judgment upon all this, wondering whether we have the faith in Mr. Geen to lead us to go and see.

The fishing of which he tells us is glorious, and in this we are entirely with him—that he gives pride of place to the pollack, the fish that round Scottish shores we call the lythe. Mr. Geen actually names him first, before the salmon; and though he makes some little apology for this, and though the real reason that he gives him this proud position is that it is chiefly with pollack-fishing that this section of the book is

occupied, still, there is no doubt that he is doing no more than justice, and a justice that has been rather long delayed, to the finest sea-fish for the angler that is on our coasts. Mr. Geen knows plenty about salmon-fishing to be able to make a just comparison. He catches a fair sprinkling of salmon, and fine baskets of sea-trout (there called white trout), in this section of the book that is devoted to Ireland, and in the second section, which is given up to Scottish salmon-fishing, he catches a great many more. So he knows what he is talking about when he says that the first downward rush of a pollack is stronger, taking the fish weight for weight, than any rush of a salmon. And you catch respectable pollack up to 15lb. often, and occasionally more. In the salmon-fishing part the author makes the astute observation that a salmon gives you more and more fun, as a rule, the bigger it is, up to 20lb., but, after that size, less. But something in this consideration depends, we think, on the river. In a big river, the big fish are not overgrown fish, and it seems as if the fish that have overgrown the standard that the river can produce and keep in vigour are the fish that grow slow in movement. Mr. Geen has nothing but a stout (and not very artfully-concealed) contempt for those who hold that salmon do not feed in fresh water; but on all questions connected with the mysterious life-history of these fish he speaks with that modest agnosticism which is the wont of all but those who have had no opportunities for learning how very little they know. The last section of Mr. Geen's book is about fishing in the Home Counties, in the Thames, and the like placid-flowing rivers, and everywhere, of course, he carries with him the same attributes of kindness, good-fellowship, and an instinct to see the very best side of every one of his fellow-men.

It is, perhaps, the most generous book on fishing ever written. It tells you where to go if you want to catch fish, as

well as how to set about catching them, with a liberality that some less generous spirits would certainly complain of as "giving the show away." But this is an attitude that the author would not tolerate for a moment; and if any were to turn and accuse him of "giving the show away," he would reply at once that it was just what he meant to do, and just what it was the duty of every right-minded sportsman to do for another. He would be no niggard about it, but would blame those that are. He even has a charity for a poacher, and quotes what is really a very remarkable extract from a letter from the National Schoolmaster at Teelin, evidently a very intelligent man and a very good fellow, whose photograph is given, and might quite well have been taken, so like it is, from Mr. John Ball, the golfer. This man writes: "I have heard my father speak, and I have read my country's history, and I know I have the right to fish and shoot when and where I like." And to this remarkable extract Mr. Geen appends the remarkable comment: "I am not sure that his sentiments would not be mine were I an Irishman. I feel almost sure they would." Nevertheless, he is eloquent on the loss Ireland is suffering by the depletion of her rivers by poaching, whereas they might bring so much money into the country if they were fairly fished and visitors had the attraction for coming to them that their fair fishing might afford.

It is to be understood that the whole purpose of the book is to amuse and interest rather than to teach, and no angler can conceivably find it dull. At the same time, though there is little didactic intention, there will be few who may not learn something from its pages; and even if there be no "tricks of the trade" hitherto unlearnt that it can teach, it may impart something of the true spirit of the sport to some of those who are more than enough proficient in its tricks. The author, at Friars Style Lodge, Richmond, seems to be his own publisher."



Bertram C. Wickison.

ON AN ESSEX RIVER.

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## TRAINS TWICE A WEEK.

**A** WAY among the highlands of North Staffordshire, remote from anywhere of importance, there is an eight miles length of narrow-gauge rails winding sinuously through one of the prettiest valleys in the kingdom, where twice weekly, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the echoes are awakened and sheep and cattle disturbed by a puffing, dumpy, smoky little engine, with a maximum speed limit of a dozen miles an hour, and a single carriage and maybe a coal-truck in tow. Like a slum dwelling in which the sole apartment is dining-room, drawing-room, bedroom, and every other room combined, the carriage is composite first class, second class, third class, and guard's van, and the outside platform is available for they who would vie with the engine at smoking. Passengers embark and alight at platforms flush with the rails. Except at the termini, the stations are *sans* everything save the sign-post locating the station, a seat, and, in some instances, a lamp and diminutive waiting-room. And the train obligingly stops practically anywhere when required.

And this, surely by courtesy, is a railway; and recently constructed at that, for it was but in June last that the two engines drew the couple of cars and brace of waggon conveyances, the entire rolling-stock of the system, laden with the management and shareholders, out of the village of Waterhouses for the inaugural run. It is a lilliputian affair with, of course, a large patronymic, viz., The Leek and Manifold Valley Light Railway Company, Limited, and was instituted, with the assistance of a substantial Government subsidy, to open up the agricultural neighbourhood surrounding the magnificent splendour of the valley of the Manifold, as well as to endeavour to lure capital towards the hidden treasure still supposed to be remaining in the ancient copper mines of Ecton, whence a single year's profits are alleged locally to have furnished a former Duke of Devonshire with the wherewithal to construct the beautiful Crescent at Buxton.

Trippers patronised the route royally during the summer months, although the last train from the northern terminus did leave at 5 p.m., and the secretary smilingly boasted of the receipts. But even the sceptics who said the winter would assuredly come, and with it a falling-off of passenger traffic, were surprised when the service was shortened to twice a week—apparently light railways are not amenable to the provisions of the Railway Act, which stipulates for a train a day at the Parliamentary fare. True, this combination of passenger and mineral train, with the puffing, snorting, smoky little locomotive, runs up and down the valley three times on each of those days; but the service is only twice weekly for all that.

Things will be better, the management assures us, when the heavy section of railway, which is to connect Waterhouses with the rest of the North Stafford system near Leek, is completed. The contract arranged for the work to be finished long ago; but shifting embankments and other troubles of a like nature have retarded its progress, and, incidentally, increased expenses in similar proportion. To fulfil their compact with the little company with the big name, the North Staffordshire Railway Company invested in a motor-omnibus—a gigantic, cumbersome, steam-propelled Behemoth, of nigh on 3 tons, which, as it travelled through the town, fairly shook the foundations of the architecture of Leek, disturbing the equa-

nimity of the tradesmen, whose wares tumbled in confusion from shelves and the dainty symmetries in windows. There it was promptly dubbed "The Earthquake." In the country, as it careered clumsily in the summer-time, it scared even staid old livery horses; it put the fear of death into other animal life; and, tearing along like an animated and intoxicated Juggernaut admitted of no question as to its proprietary right to be considered king of the road.

All this, however, would have been forgiven had it been proved reliable. But from the first it showed it had a will of its own, and could be made to go only when it so felt disposed. I was in a huff at the opening of the little railway, and th-



W. Nethsdale.

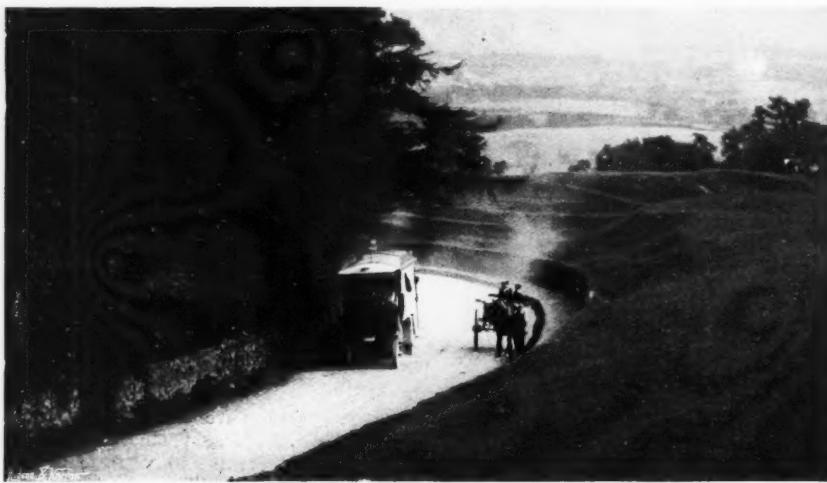
ECTON STATION.

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distinguished party it had been reserved to convey travelled from Leek behind horseflesh. Then, naturally, it had a limited capacity, and many a poor tripper had to shank the dreary eight miles between Waterhouses and Leek because of its being physically incapable of accommodating on its last trip back the folk it had carried outwards on three journeys; and even the fortunate ones who had obtained preference because, possibly, they had to travel beyond Leek, were by no means certain of reaching their homes that night. Then the North Stafford introduced a second, which was, in every respect but its registration number, the fellow of its predecessor, and, on more occasions than one, both vehicles have been on the spree together; ay, and for days at a time at that.

From Leek to Hulme End, the northern terminus of the little railway, by road, up one side of a mountain and down the moorland slope beyond, is a matter of ten miles, which even a cyclist in the worst of weathers, provided, of course, the roads are clear of snow, can accomplish in little over an hour, while the schedule time by motor-bus, *via* Waterhouses, and the little railway, is two hours and ten minutes. The Saturday midday return leaves at a quarter to one, and, the bus being willing, passengers arrive in Leek at 4.20 p.m. Really, if one is in a hurry, it is quicker to walk.

Whether the venture will accumulate funds sufficient to warrant a dividend for the speculators, many of whom are farmers in the country-side, or not, the system, with a reliable service between Leek and Waterhouses, is certain to be well patronised again in the summer months, especially if the management carry out their intention of running a Sunday service; for the valley of the Manifold, from Hulme End, by Ecton, Swainsley, Wetton Mill, and Weag's Bridge, to Ilam, rivals, nay, in its more majestic grandeur it excels, the glory of its near and more famous neighbour, the Dove. The villages of the neighbourhood—Grindon, Butterton, Warslow, and Wetton—all perched high upon adjacent hilltops, whence the valley and the various intermediate stations are accessible only by steep, rough, and rugged stone-strewn lanes, with a picture at every turn, are small and scattered, pastoral, primitive, and picturesque, and hospitable. Hulme End is a tiny hamlet—two or three farmhouses, a chapel, a small general store, and a public-house; but Waterhouses is more pretentious, and is well-nigh as large and now certainly more important, than all the other villages together. Features of the Manifold Valley, besides the famed Ecton Hill, a Thor's Cave, a large, dome-shaped cavern in the face of a grim headland, which may



W. Nethsdale. THE MOTOR-BUS IN THE COUNTRY.

Copyright

may not have been a baronial residence in the days of the primæval Briton; Beeston Tor, a gigantic limestone cliff, which in Derbyshire would certainly be a "Lover's Leap"; and an alleged shebeen. Moreover, it possesses an interesting physiographical phenomenon, the river from below Wetton Mill to Ilam running literally in double harness—the one course obvious, open to the heavens, making fertile the strip of adjoining meadow-land, and serving as a watering-place for numerous cattle and sheep, as well as affording sport to disciples of Izaak Walton; the other hidden and subterranean, and in a dry season insidiously draining every drop of the precious water from the useful bed above, making life miserable for the farmer and his stock, surprising and driving away the unsuspecting camper-out, leaving the stepping-stones high and dry, and, for the time being, superfluous, and here and there a pool, with imprisoned trout, which eventually becomes absorbed by evaporation. From time to time efforts have been made to cement the bottom of the river-bed where the waters disappear, but without success beyond the fact that whereas formerly it was impossible to locate the exact places of exit into the lower regions, several small holes can now be observed down which the waters run; but as surely as one of these is blocked up do the waters find their way, by some hitherto unsuspected opening, into the hidden channel. The contrast of the dry river-bed in summer with the torrent of seething water in winter is indeed remarkable. And then, of course, there is this modern but miniature and paradoxically primitive railway, with the fussy little whistling engine progressing leisurely always amid a dense volume of smoke, in the brief annals of which all the railway humour of a lifetime is condensed, between the termini of the Leek and Manifold Valley Light Railway.

As for the bus, or, rather, the buses, oh dear! They have for long enough been forbidden the main thoroughfares of Leek. At night-time, on the wild moorland roads, to even a



W. Nithsdale.

THE MOTOR-BUS AT LEEK.

Copyright

Pliny declared that a chaplet of violets was an infallible remedy for headache, whilst he strongly recommended a liniment of violet roots and vinegar for the cure of gout; and a garland of violets was considered an effectual charm against "the palling sickness," or epilepsy. A belief in the healing properties of the violet was once common in our own country. During the days of the Stuarts distilled violets were recommended by doctors as a cure for consumption, whilst the flower was said to cureague if the patient ate the first blossom which he saw after the New Year. Until recently, violet syrup was a popular remedy with village dames in the Midlands for children during teething troubles. The violet was greatly valued as a cosmetic in the Highlands, a quaint old Gaelic recipe declaring: "Anoint thy face with goats' milk, in which violets have been infused, and there is not a young prince upon earth who will not be charmed with thy beauty." The Romans made an excellent drink, called violatum, by steeping the blossoms of this plant in wine. So highly was it regarded that the violatum was only used upon great festive occasions. The violet is still used by the Turks in the manufacture of sherbet.

Our own poets unite in representing the violet as the image of sweetness. In one passage, Shakespeare speaks of

"Violets dim

"But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,"  
whilst we seem to feel with him the freshness  
and purity of a wind

"That breathes upon a bank of violets  
Stealing and giving odour."

It was the favourite flower of Matthew Prior, who says:

"The pride of every grove, I chose  
The violet sweet."

Shelley describes a garden where

"The snowdrop and then the violet  
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,  
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent  
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument."

In "A Dream of Fair Women," Tennyson alludes to the fragrant scent of this flower with much feeling:

"The smell of violets hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame."

Browning gives a description of

"One warm morn when winter  
Crept aged from the earth, and spring's first breath  
Blew soft from the moist hills; the blackthorn boughs,  
So dark in the bare wood, when glistening  
In the sunshine were white with coming buds,  
Like the bright side of a sorrow, and the banks  
Had violets opening from sleep like eyes."

The violet used to have a special literary association in Provence. During the Middle Ages an annual fête was held at Toulouse in the beginning of May, at which a golden violet was awarded to the troubadour who was deemed best at lyric composition. The festival commenced with floral games and



W. Nithsdale.

WETTON MILL STATION.

Copyright

common man, each is a veritable illuminated incubus. What then must be the impression on the spectral headless rider who from time immemorial has frequented these parts and filled superstitious folk in the country-side with awe? W. H. NITHSDALE.

## THE VIOLET.

"Long as there are violets  
They shall have a place in story."—WORDSWORTH.

MANY writers, both of prose and poetry, have mentioned "violets, white and pied and blue," since the days of Homer and Virgil, who made such frequent allusions to this flower. According to Greek traditions, it is supposed to have first sprung up in honour of Jupiter and Juno, a belief alluded to in the "Iliad," where it is said:

"Glad earth perceives, and from her bosom pours  
Unbidden herbs and voluntary flowers;  
Thick new-born violets a soft carpet spread."

the election of a Queen of Beauty. By the side of the latter's throne was placed a pedestal bearing a small golden vase of elaborate design.

"Ard in the golden vase was set,  
The prize—a golden violet,"

which was presented to the successful competitor with great ceremony at the conclusion of the fête. Subsequently the troubadours, who were composed chiefly of knights, although they numbered several women amongst their ranks, adopted the violet as a distinctive badge. Many of the golden violets won at these floral games were long preserved upon the high altar of the church of La Daurade, where Clemence Isaure, the celebrated poetess, was buried.

The violet was the floral emblem of Athens, the City of the Violet Crown, though it is said that the title comes from the vivid reflection of the tints with which the setting sun often bathes the surrounding hills, and not from the flower itself. The emblem was chosen because the citizens were Ionians in origin, and therefore the Ion, or violet, commemorated the name of their founder. The same emblem was adopted many centuries later by the Bonapartists, when Napoleon, "le père de la violette," was banished to Elba because he promised that he "would return with the violets," as, indeed, he did, in the spring of 1815. In "Napoleon's Farewell" Byron writes:

"Farewell to thee, France! But when Liberty ralies,  
Once more in thy regions, remember me then—  
The violet still grows in the depths of thy valleys,  
Though wither'd, thy tears shall unfold it again."

The prophet Mahomet is said to have had a great affection for the violet, which he declared to far excel all other flowers in sweetness.

From earliest ages violets have been associated with premature death, probably because they fade at the approach of summer, and so are "looked upon as apt emblems of those who enjoyed the bright springtime of life, and no more." It was in accordance with this superstition that Laertes expressed a wish that violets might spring from the grave of the hapless Ophelia:

"The love of youth is in your breath,  
Love of youth more strong than death,  
Violets! March violets!  
Other sweetness, too, ye take  
Often kept for saddest sake;  
Kept for soft'ning old regrets;  
To hearts throbbing ye are prest;  
Ye are laid on hearts at rest,  
Violets! March violets!"

There used to be a rural superstition that there would be some widely-spread epidemic of sickness if violets and roses blossomed freely together during the autumn, each out of their proper season. In other districts cottage people would never allow less than a large handful of violets to be brought indoors when they were first in bloom, from a curious fear of the direful havoc that would ensue amongst their young ducks and chickens if the first few blossoms were disturbed.

The common violet used to be termed Herb Trinity, because its threefold division was a symbol of that mysterious doctrine. In the language of flowers the blue violet is said to indicate modesty, probably on account of its well-known liking for springing up in retired spots, such as the shelter of

"A mossy stone  
Half hidden from the eye."

White violets are supposed to indicate candour, whilst the large Russian violets symbolise haughtiness and pride.

JOYCE COVERT.

## A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

**I**T is probable that most of the readers of Mr. Henry James's new novel will confess to a feeling of sympathy for Colonel Bob Assingham, who, with his wife, forms a regularly intermittent commentary on the drama set forth in *The Golden Bowl* (Methuen). Mrs. Assingham is American, which may account for her sharpness of mind, but poor Bob Assingham has an English dulness of comprehension, which keeps him floundering in the wake of fact. At midnight the Colonel and his Fanny discuss the affairs of their friends, the Prince and Princess, and Mr. and Mrs. Adam Verver, the quartette with whom this story is concerned:

"They're wonderful," said Fanny Assingham.  
"Indeed," her husband concurred. "I really think they are."  
"You'd think it still more if you knew; but you don't know, because you don't see. Their situation"—this was what he didn't see—"is too extraordinary."  
"Too?" He was willing to try.  
"Too extraordinary to be believed, I mean, if one didn't see. But just that, in a way, is what saves them. They take it seriously."  
He followed at his own pace. "Their situation?"  
"The incredible side of it, they make it credible."

"Credible then—you do say—to *you*?"

She looked at him again for an interval. "They believe in it themselves. They take it for what it is. And that," she said, "saves them."

"But if what it "is," is just their chance——?"

"It's their chance for what I told you when Charlotte first turned up. It's their chance for the idea that I was then sure she had."

The Colonel showed his effort to recall. "Oh, your idea, at different moments of every one of *their* ideas!" This dim procession visibly mustered before him, and, with the best will in the world, he could but watch its immensity. "Are you speaking now of something to which you can comfortably settle down?"

Again, for a little, she only glowered at him. "I've come back to my belief, and that I have done so——"

"Well?" he asked, as she paused.

"Well, shows that I'm right. . . . They're beautiful," she declared.

"The Prince and Charlotte?"

"The Prince and Charlotte. That's how they're so remarkable. And the beauty," she explained, "is that they're afraid for them. Afraid, I mean, for the others."

"For Mr. Verver and Maggie?" It did take some following. "Afraid of what?"

"Afraid of themselves."

The Colonel wondered. "Of themselves? Of Mr. Verver's and Maggie's selves?"

Mrs. Assingham remained patient as well as lucid. "Yes—of such blindness too. But most of all of their own danger."

He turned it over. "That danger being the blindness——?"

"That danger being their position. What their position contains—all the elements—I needn't at this time of day attempt to tell you. It contains, luckily—for that's the mercy—everything *but* blindness: I mean on their part. The blindness," said Fanny, "is primarily her husband's."

He stood for a moment; he would have it straight. "Whose husband's?"

"Mr. Verver's," she went on; "the blindness is most of all his. That they feel—that they see. But it's also his wife's."

"Whose wife's?"

Poor Colonel! With the best will in the world, like him, the reader can but watch this immensity, this dim procession of motives, of hints, of suggestions, of innuendos, of tangled skeins.

The objective in a work of fiction is naturally the unravelling of human action and human motive, and this may be accomplished in diverse ways, according to diverse individualities and temperaments. Individuality is the keynote of the best fiction. The personality of Mr. Meredith pervades his work, as does the personality of Mr. Hardy his. And in the former, at least, that individuality oversteps at times the frontiers of mannerism. So, too, with other great writers, such as Browning or Carlyle. Mr. Henry James has a well-established claim to be accounted among the great. His genius has for more than a generation busied itself with the elaboration of intricate human problems. But, like those others, he has descended to be the victim of a mannerism. Undoubtedly those who have pursued his career as a novelist cannot but be struck by the immense gain in his insight, in his knowledge, in his sympathy, and in his particularity. His advance in comprehension has marched with his retrogression in method. He surfeits with detail and analysis, till he becomes obscure, and he appears to revel in that obscurity. It is not often that he uses a plot of any complexity. He has abandoned that ingenuous ingenuity of youth in favour of simpler, bolder, and, perhaps, less effective mechanism. His point of view is thus to a certain extent changed, and it is a change that is more or less deliberate. Propounding a problem of the simplest, he delights to weave it into a tissue of subtleties. He psychologises everything. That brain, one feels, is not content unless it be brooding, hatching original and recondite motives. Mr. James's work now is psychical histology. He lives with the pathology of human minds, dissects, explores, makes his notes, and he reads his paper.

In this function there is this defect, that his part is necessarily that of the anatomist merely. His work is not synthetic, but purely analytic. He does not build up, but takes to pieces. And this is in defiance of the artistic canon that fiction must comprise synthesis. You are, in reading him, more than conscious of the analysis—it becomes an obsession, the nightmare even of a marvellous mind from whom no secrets are hid.

This affection for the abstruse byways of the human mind and human emotion has grown on Mr. James. He loves to deal with abstract things, and shuns concrete effects. One feels that the shattering of the golden bowl in this story must cause the author a start. It must have shocked him. It was an event; it was gross materiality. It was something brutally breaking in on that idealism of his—that idealism which is elusive, allusive, and illusive.

*The Golden Bowl* illustrates these remarks. The Prince, who is an Italian, must make a rich marriage. He has had certain passages with Charlotte Stant, a young American of no fortune, and turns, with the wisdom of his position, to Maggie Verver, also an American, but the daughter of the wealthy Adam Verver. No sooner is Maggie married to the Prince, than Charlotte marries Adam Verver. The looker-on, meaning Mrs. Assingham, sees most of the game, and it becomes clear to her—

as clear as Mr. James will allow it to be, that the Prince and his wife's stepmother have some relation to each other. Until page 365 this situation is dissected, and not until then are we in a position to state definitely that Maggie knows. Here she bursts out to her friend Fanny: "What awfulness, in heaven's name, is there between them? What do you believe, what do you know?" Mrs. Assingham believes a good deal, but she does not know; and we must say that the reader remains in ignorance to the end as to the precise degree of awfulness there is between them.

The action of the story, worked as it is in remote conversations, in dialogues between Colonel and Fanny Assingham, in meticulous dissections by the author, does not materialise absolutely until page 425, when the bowl is broken and Maggie frankly charges her husband with his offence. This is so blunt, coming after the elaborate evasions of the story, as to sound like a smack in the face, as to seem even vulgar and indecorous. One wonders why there was necessity, after all this beating of the air, to brutalise

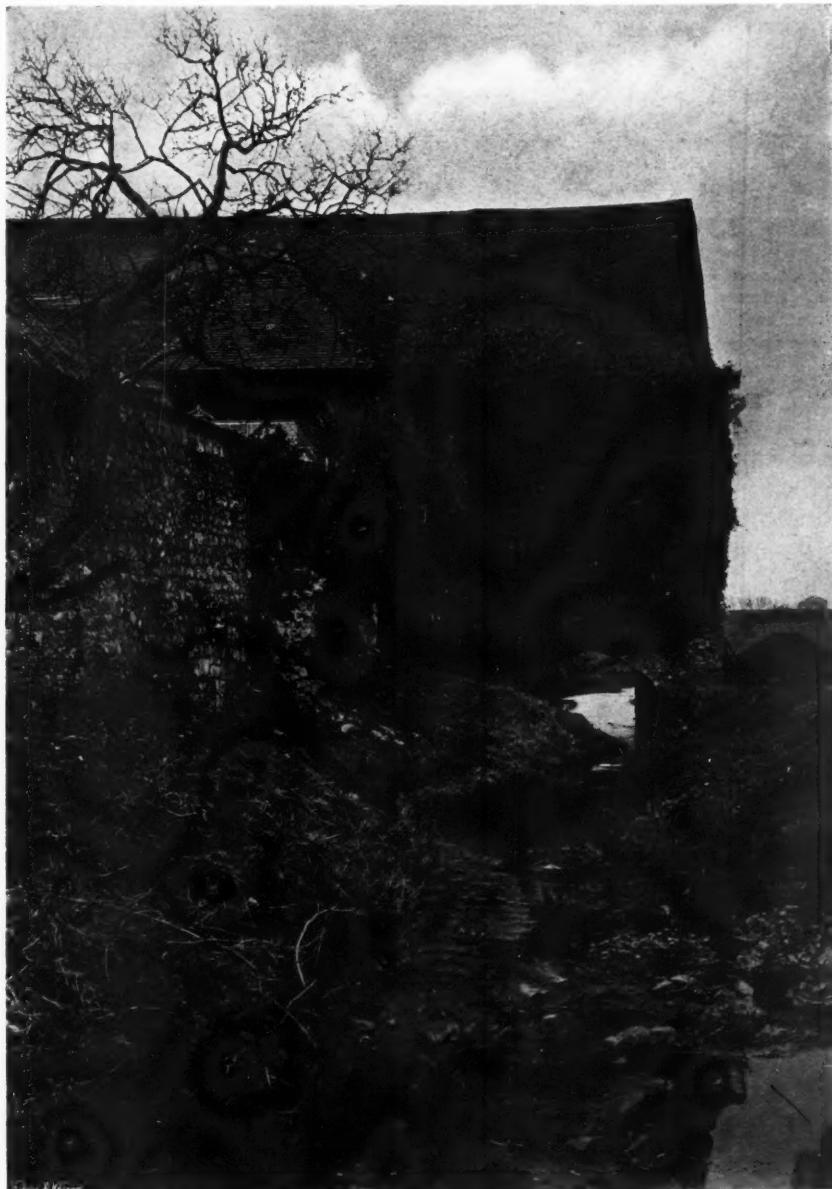
the gossamer of the wonderful web. And yet beneath the meshes of the psychology and mannerism of the book is a story of the profoundest insight. The characterisation is perfect, and each person is built up by such intricate and detailed brushmarks as are used by Manet. Seen close they bewilder; from a little distance, as when one closes the covers, the picture of human beings in situations tragically ironic is more vivid than any picture achieved by simple and less laborious methods. It is true the characters talk as Mr. James writes, but they only talk. They think as themselves, and therein he shows his mastery of his art. He explains his characters in terms of himself, as does Mr. Meredith, as do all great writers. That he is frightened by bare fact, and prefers that his concepts should remain as ideas in a limbo of their own, is unfortunate for his readers; but in preferring this he is but fulfilling his part as a great scientific analyst in art, detachedly investigating phenomena and precipitating the secrets of his solutions. We must accept him for what he is—the greatest intellectual force in modern fiction since Mr. Meredith ceased to write.

## STREAMS AND THEIR INHABITANTS.

**A** YEAR or two ago Mr. William Senior, in course of an amusing speech at a dinner of the Fly-fishers' Club, made special reference to Lord Denbigh, who was in the chair. From time immemorial, he said (or words to like effect), belted earls had been renowned in the pages of history for adventurous exploits, and the name of the Earl of Denbigh would go down to posterity as that of the daring spirit who had introduced rainbow trout into the water in Buckingham Palace garden. From time to time we have heard rumours of the faring of these fish in a habitat so different from that natural to them, and always the rumour has been that they were faring well; so that the daring of Lord Denbigh in introducing them would seem to be justified by the result. But it is quite evident that one result of that experiment, of which a good deal was said at the time it was made, and of its promise of success, has been to induce people to introduce rainbow trout into waters that are altogether unsuited to them, and so to cause a good deal of disappointment and some waste of money. The inference seemed to be justified that if these fish would "do" in the Buckingham Palace pond, they would do anywhere, and in consequence they have been put into the most ill-adapted places, have been treated with inattention, and, much to the surprise of those who put them into these unsuitable waters, have not been found there when wanted.

The inference was just, up to a point. It is fairly sure that of all kinds of trout known to us, and of all kinds of the so-called "game" fish, the rainbow trout is the only one that would have a reasonable chance of living prosperously in any London pond; but in order that it should live there in prosperity two conditions were essential—that it should be well fed, and that it should have no chance of going away. These are the conditions that have not prevailed on the many ponds, in other respects far better adapted for the trout than that in the garden of Buckingham Palace, into which they have been turned with such disappointing and vanishing results. They have been turned into ponds from which they could find an exit, and they have not been sufficiently handled. The rainbow trout, it has been proved by repeated experience, is a wanderer by habit, and he is also very voracious. It is this latter amiable quality that makes him such a good sporting fish, and perhaps his fine, healthy appetite is the reason that he thrives so well in waters that in other regards do not seem favourable to his welfare. His voracity is so well recognised that it is generally deemed that the motive of his tendency to wander is the search for food; but this motive is not sufficient to explain all cases of his wandering, for he will disappear sometimes even when most plenteously fed. That lack of food is a motive, and a very adequate one, for going somewhere else to look for it we cannot hesitate to admit, and

it is a motive with which we must be in perfect sympathy; but his motives, like those of higher beings, seem sometimes to be mixed. Even where he is fully fed, he shows a tendency to wander, especially just before and after the time of spawning. These are movements that seem to have no connection with the search for food. The movement previous to spawning has the obvious motive of seeking suitable redds; the tendency to wander afterwards may be prompted by a wish to find the temperature and current most recuperative of his wasted energy, and one of the first authorities on pisciculture in Scotland has given it as



W. A. J. Hensler.

THE BROOK.

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his opinion that the rainbow will not stay, that is, of course, if he has a chance of getting away, unless he has water of an ample depth to go to. Yet, even so, all the mass of evidence that we are beginning to accumulate about these fish goes to show that they will after a while wander away out of our British rivers, even where they have abundance of deep water. It is more than suspected that they are attracted, like the salmon and the sea-trout (and like our native brown trout, even, on occasion), by the more plentiful food that is to be found in the salt waters of the estuaries. The purpose for which they are most admirably suited is for introduction into just such a pond as that in Buckingham Palace garden. It has been proved by many an experiment elsewhere that they do not suffer from crowding, nor from sluggishness of water, to anything like the extent of the brown trout, or, indeed, any other known variety. If the pond is such that they cannot escape from it, they are better than any other kind for turning in. They will require more feeding, but their food is cheap. If the pond is very well supplied with food naturally, it may not be necessary to hand-feed them; but the more they have to eat the better they will thrive, and the quicker they will grow.

For turning into ponds where there is a possibility of exit, it becomes a question whether Loch Leven or brown trout are the better. The brown trout seem to require a fresher water,

with more springs to aerate it, than the Loch Levens. Yet the Loch Levens have a tendency after a year or two to degenerate, to become bottom-feeders or cannibals, to grow "pikey" in aspect, and to decline rising to the fly. Curiously enough, they seem to fall into bottom-feeding ways far more quickly in ponds where there is but a poor supply of mollusc or crustacean food for them, and before turning in Loch Levens it is very advisable to turn in

some fresh-water snails and shrimps, and, if necessary, to plant in the stream flowing into the pond some of the aquatic weeds that are liked by the molluscs. This is also a very good provision to make before the turning in of brown trout, but it is even more important as a preliminary to introducing Loch Levens. But for streams or for ponds, through which a strong stream runs, there is a fairly general consensus of opinion (always supposing that the pond is not suitable for rainbow, because of the possibility of their escape) that our common brown trout

are the best. Some pisciculturists advise a cross between the trout of the Highland burns and the trout of the chalk streams of the South. The argument is that the former strain gives boldness and vigour, and the latter gives size. With regard to the size at which it is best to introduce the fish, much depends on your patience, and on your pike and perch. If you are in a hurry, or if you have coarse fish that would prey on the young trout, you must put in two year olds; but the younger you can



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A LOWLAND STREAM.

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RIPPLING OVER THE STONES.



A. Sheppard.

THE PATH BY THE STREAM.

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put the fish in the better for the ultimate stock, and the smaller the percentage of loss on the cost price. Best of all is to introduce them in the condition that is known as "eyed ova," that is to say, eggs in which the future fish has just begun to make a visible appearance in the form of a darkening of the substance of the translucent egg. This, of course, means that you have some suitable redds for putting out the eggs on, and the redds are not very easy for the amateur to make. The flow of water has to be controlled, and it has to be maintained. The gradient of the redd has to be gradual; in fact, the difficulties are so complex that obtaining the advice of the nearest professional pisciculturist on the subject is nearly certain to be an economical step in the long run. A cage of wire-netting has to be put up for the protection of the young fish in the alevin and fry stage, and eventually the reward of all this care and patience is likely to be far more liberal than the more immediate result of turning in fish of a more mature growth. And these are considerations that apply to any of the three species, rainbow, Loch Leven, or brown trout, that are most commonly introduced into British ponds and rivers.

### A NEGLECTED POND.

**I**T is not often that fly-fishing for trout can be indulged in in November, and we had some misgivings as to how far it might be strictly legal to try it; but the thought kept recurring to us that, after all, they were only tame trout, so to speak, and were we not entitled to do as we liked with our own? The weather, too, was tempting, so we hushed any qualms of conscience, and determined to risk it, and preparations were made accordingly.

It was beautiful as we walked through the fields next morning, quite warm for the time of year, though with not much more than an average amount of November sun shining through the far-off haze. Passing some fir woods we found plenty of insect-life upon the wing. Little humming throngs of culicidae were everywhere disporting themselves under the lea of the trees, and this seemed a good omen, for why should not water-flies be out as well? A good many stray "bluebottles" were also on the wing, or sitting upon the sunny side of stone walls, and we know well how fond trout are of them.

The pond to which we were bent was, until little more than a year ago, considered a barren spot, worthless except as a watering-place for cattle, and incapable, from its position, of being turned to any better account. More than thirty years ago it had been a quarry from which limestone had been worked, and at one end of it still stand the ruins of the once substantial kiln in which the lime used to be burnt, and which now affords nesting-places amongst its decayed masonry to numerous sparrows, starlings, and a pair of stock-doves. The pond itself is not much more than 100yds. in length by perhaps half that distance in width, very deep at one side, where it is bounded by the face of the rock that used to be quarried, and sloping out upon the other in mounds of débris and "quarry-redd," whose nakedness is now haply clothed with furze and bramble, the home of countless rabbits, and thick enough to hold an occasional fox. Here and there round the water's edge strong clumps of bullrush (*Typha latifolia*) and *Sparganium ramosum* have established themselves, and a few of the long stems and oval leaves of *potamogeton* still float upon the surface, but they are all in the sere and yellow leaf of late autumn, and too rotten now to interfere much with our lines. The bottom of the pond, as far as the eye can penetrate, is covered with thick beds of moss-

like plants of the characeæ order, and in springtime the place is alive with frogs and toads, masses of whose spawn, and black clouds of whose tadpoles, then line its shallow margin. But just eighteen months ago we had induced the owner to try the experiment of stocking it with trout, and for this purpose a few hundred yearling rainbows were procured from Howietoun and turned into it. The largest of the little fish did not then exceed 5in. in length; but so rapidly have they grown that many of them are now great lusty fellows of over 1lb. in weight. We may just add that there is no run of water into the pond, which is entirely dependent upon rain for its supplies, and it is very seldom indeed that there is any overflow from it; but its depth, no doubt, helps greatly to keep the water at a pretty even temperature, while during the long time it has lain fallow, plant-life, all self-

sown, has luxuriated, with the natural result that it is now teeming with insect-life, not to mention water-snails and other creatures, which all contribute towards a food supply for the fish. How many similar ponds are there in the country, we wonder, which, at an infinitesimal cost when compared with results, might not be turned to a like good purpose? The requisite amount of knowledge regarding the fish is not difficult to obtain, and even where the water is not naturally stocked with plants, very little trouble is involved in the introduction and cultivation of them, and the insects, etc., which feed upon them. With the least possible assistance Nature will do the rest, though if immediate results are desired more help must, of course, be given



F. W. Livesay. A MILL ON THE ITCHEN. Copyright

her. And then, quite apart from fishing, what a charming spot a pond of this sort may be made! Water-lilies, if desired, and a host of other beautiful and interesting plants, may be introduced into it, while there are multitudes of moisture-loving things which will flourish round its margin, and every plant or willow we stick in not only assists in beautifying the place, but contributes largely to the multiplication of insect food for the fish in one form or another. The pond may very easily be over-planted, so as to interfere with the comforts of the fisherman

(though that is easily avoided by the exercise of a little judgment in planting, or may be remedied afterwards by cutting); but in a general way the more plant-life there is in and about the water the better fish will thrive in it. And then the birds, too! Encouraged by the vegetation, fowl of one sort or another, according to situation, will quickly be attracted to it, with the result that an occasional wild mallard, or a brace of teal, will come as a welcome addition to the bag when, in partridge-shooting, the guns happen to pass that way.

To hark back to our story, however. On arriving at the pond we found that a gentle breeze from the west was just sufficient to nicely ripple the surface of the water over about half its length, coming in nice little intermittent puffs; but at the end where we happened to strike it we could look down from the high bank into some 6ft. of clear water without a ripple upon it, and what a sight it was to be sure! There, right below us, were some half-dozen large fish, 12in. to 15in. in length, cruising lazily about, and every now and then rising to the surface to suck down a fly. Great boils they made in the oily water as they rose, and it was almost with the excitement of childhood that we fell to putting our rods together. At this end of the pond, with the water like glass, it was obvious that to cast a fly over them in the ordinary way would be to court failure and to instantly send down every fish; but the place was admirably suited to "dapping" with a real live bluebottle; so having secured a fly, we crept up to the edge of the rock, and, hiding behind a small thorn bush, let him drop gently down upon the water. Hardly had he touched the surface, when there was a great swirl in the water, and a minute later we had lifted out our first fish—a beauty of over 1ft. in length, and weighing close on 1lb., and so beautifully marked, too, all green, silver, and orange, and in the pink of condition. Our object, however, was not to kill fish, so, after duly admiring him, we returned him safely to the water; and the other fish, which were feeding here, having been scared off by our proceedings, we walked up to the far end of the pond, and began casting into the ripple. In fishing still water we seldom find it pays to use more than a single fly, and here we put up a sort of silver-bodied March Brown, than which there is no more killing fly for pond-fishing. We always fancy the fish take it

for a beetle of some sort or a "water-boatman," and if worked pretty quickly through the water in imitation of the short, quick jerks with which that latter insect propels itself along, we have often found it most effective. Our attention was first drawn to the great possibilities of the "water-boatman" as a lure for trout from a little incident which happened some years ago. A small boy of our acquaintance had a large garden aquarium, into which we had been instrumental in helping him to introduce some small trout from a neighbouring burn. These had been in the tank only a day or two, and were still very shy, utterly refusing to take food of any sort so long as we were watching, though the minnows and goldfish were so tame as almost to take their food from our fingers. We were amusing ourselves in trying to coax them to feed, when our young friend brought up a large bottle in which he had a lot of "boatmen." The instant one of these was turned into the aquarium it was pursued and devoured by one of the trout, who scattered the other fish in all directions in its eagerness to catch the poor "boatman." Another and another were tried with like results, the trout seeming quite unable to resist them only, and all shyness being gone the moment a "boatman" appeared. From this the idea arose that an imitation "boatman," with thickish silver body, might be used with advantage in still water, and the result has quite exceeded expectations.

But we have again been digressing, and, in sooth, there is not much more to tell. Suffice it to say that, from the wind-side of the pond, where the surface was curled into little wavelets, we had capital sport, quickly landing over a dozen nice fish, nearly all of about 1ft. in length. They ran strongly, and fought with determination, and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. All the fish were returned to the water except four, which we carried over in a tin can to a little pond a short distance away, and let them go there. And, as we walked home in the afternoon, the exclamation kept rising again and again to the lips of our friend, "By Jove! what a duffer I was never to have thought of turning fish in there before!" And so wilt thou say, oh gentle reader, the owner of some long-neglected pond, if haply thou layest the moral of this story to thy heart, and goest and doest likewise.

LICHEN GREY.

## THE SHIRE HORSE SHOW.

**O**N the principle that the man who succeeds in causing two blades of corn to grow where only one would grow before, is a benefactor to the human race, so those who undertake the improvement of a breed of horses or cattle are equally engaged in the fulfilment of a duty which is clearly beneficial to their fellow-creatures. The principal objects which the Shire Horse Society have steadily held in view since 1878 have been the improvement of the English breed of cart-horses and the distribution of sound and healthy stallions throughout the country, and the annual shows held in London under the auspices of the society afford a yearly testimony to the satisfactory results which have attended their labours. That the public are taking steady and continued interest in the breeding of Shire horses is shown by the continually-increasing number of entries for these shows, as well as by the marked improvement in the quality of the animals exhibited; and it seems to be the general opinion of those best qualified to judge that the show, which commenced on February 21st, has been one of the most successful ever held. It would perhaps appear, in glancing over the statistics, that there has been a falling off in the number of entries, but this is only another instance of the possible fallacy of figures. The figures given for this year, namely, 681 entries, represent the number of animals actually shown, but owing to the exigencies of space many applicants for entry had to be refused. A noteworthy feature of these shows is the admirable system of classification and numbering adopted by the management. Seven classes are allotted to stallions, seven to mares and fillies, and three to geldings; and the various classes go into the ring to be judged in the regular order of their numbers. The number of the class actually before the judges is clearly posted up, so that one can tell at a glance what classes have been judged and which of them are still awaiting the judges' verdict.

The stallion classes comprised 389 entries, of which the three year olds were the most numerous with 96 representatives; 277 mares and fillies were entered for competition, 57 of which were yearlings, and 54 two year olds. Clearly the best of the classes was that for two year old fillies, for which 54 entries were accepted, most of which were considerably above the average in quality; they were, moreover, remarkably forward and well grown, and it was some time before the judges were able to come to the decision which awarded the first prize in this class to Sir Albert Muntz's Dunsmore Fuchsia, a beautifully-shaped grey filly by Dunsmore Jameson (17,972) out of D'Arcy Fuchsia (23,455). Returning to the proper order of judging,

the yearling colts, 66 in number, came first into the ring—not a few of them would have done well to have remained at home—and the judges were not long in selecting some 20 of the best. A further weeding out ensued, and finally the first prize went to Mr. F. Farnsworth's Ratcliffe Forest King, by Lockinge Forest King, and bred by Mr. J. L. Harrison. Eighty-nine two year old colts followed their younger brethren into the arena, and a remarkably good lot they were; all the more honour, therefore, accrues to the winner, Chilwick Champion, bred, as his name implies, by the late Sir J. Blundell Maple, who scored the first of a remarkable series of successes for Lord Rothschild. The second prize went to Mr. James Gould's Lynn Champion, and the third was awarded to Earl Egerton's Hendre Prince William. In Class III., for three year old colts, the much-improved brown colt, Starborough Coronation, the property of Mr. Max Michaelis, bred by Mr. J. H. Bryars and sired by Lockinge Albert, won rather easily in a good class; but Norley Advance, owned and bred by Mr. C. Bell, who was placed second by the judges, is a big, upstanding, wear-and-tear-looking bay colt that found many admirers amongst the onlookers, and the third prize went to Mr. J. Gould's Raithley Tom. Lord Rothschild's Girton Charmer, for whom even higher honours were in store, won easily enough in Class IV., for four year old stallions, from Lincoln Lion, owned by the Messrs. Forshaw and Hendrick, the property of Sir P. A. Muntz. Raydon Duke, the property of the Messrs. Forshaw, was placed first in Class V., for stallions over four and under ten years of age, and not exceeding 16h. 2in. in height. The next class, for stallions of the same age measuring over 16h. 2in., was a fairly strong one, but it is perhaps needless to say that to Lord Rothschild's well-known Birdsall Menestrel, the winner of the championship of the preceding year, was awarded the pride of place. Eaton Conqueror, who filled the second place, is a horse of a very different type, certainly not without merit, but completely lacking in the class and character of Birdsall Menestrel. The easy action and jaunty carriage of Woodhall Pioneer won the first prize among stallions of ten years old and upwards. Stallions having been satisfactorily disposed of, the judging of the mares and fillies commenced with the yearling fillies, the best of whom was undoubtedly the actual winner, Tatton May Queen, by Lockinge Forest King. The two year old fillies have already been mentioned. Lord Rothschild scored yet another success in the class for three year old fillies, and in the winner, Rickford Farewell, he has a young mare of great promise; she is a very

powerful filly, with plenty of scope and nice liberty of action. There was some little difficulty in awarding the second and third prizes in this class, but they finally went to Mr. Bradley's Halstead Duchess III. and Earl Egerton's Tattern Aurora, in their respective order. Knottingly Fuchsia was quite a popular winner of the prize for four year old mares, and her owner, Mr. W. Kearns, also obtained the fourth place with Knottingly Rose. The condition in which these mares were sent into the ring reflects the greatest credit upon the management of Mr. Kearns' stud.

A very useful lot of roomy, short-legged mares put in an appearance in the class for brood mares measuring under 16h. Mr. Peter Coats's eleven year old mare Duchess of York looked as fresh and well as ever, and had no trouble in securing first place; to Mr. W. Hudson's Danesfield Lively and Mr. J. Waddington's Combine went the rosettes for the second and third places. Yet another prize went to Lord Rothschild in the following class for mares measuring between 16h. and 16h. 2in., which went to his well-known mare Blythwood Guelder Rose; last year's second, Beauty's Queen, again won the same honours for the Messrs. Forshaw. Lord Rothschild's stud was once more to the fore in the final class for mares of 16h. 2in. and over; the winner, Princess Beryl, has made much improvement since last year when she could only obtain the fifth place. The awards for the Championship have already been dealt with in COUNTRY LIFE, and in conclusion it remains but to offer my sincere congratulations to the Shire Horse Society on the marked improvement in the general class and useful qualities of the Shire horse, and upon the excellent organisation of the shows held under its auspices. At the risk of being possibly too critical, it may perhaps be suggested that a further increase in the size and weight of the Shire horse would be undesirable, unless accompanied by a corresponding increase in bone and muscular development. Many of the recent prize winners appear to the writer to be very deficient in these qualities, especially in their second thighs and quarters, and there does not seem much reason to praise either their hocks or the action of those joints. It also might not be altogether a disadvantage were these horses to be shown in harder condition and without the masses of soft, fatty flesh which appear to be a *sine qua non* with most exhibitors. To such an extent is this practice carried that many of the animals shown seemed to be quite unable to use themselves with any fire or freedom; and it is to be hoped that one may see less of this in future, and that now sufficient size has been attained, breeders will turn their attention to the better development of bone and muscle. T. H. B.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### OLD PACK-HORSE BRIDGE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]  
SIR,—In these days of petrol and steam, macadamised roads and steel rails, it is difficult to realise that a few centuries ago all road transport of merchandise was effected by means of pack-horses, travelling along narrow tracks, crossing as best they could a country swampy from lack of drainage, and often encountering streams scarcely fordable in wet weather and impassable in winter. A relic of those times exists in the ancient pack-horse bridge at Sutton, Beds, of which I enclose a photograph. A good hard road now runs along the old pack-horse track, and is crossed by a shallow stream just outside the village. The stream is spanned by a fine stone bridge at the side of the road, just wide enough to admit foot-passengers or horses. A long narrow causeway at either end of the bridge shows the marshy nature of the ground in the old days. A curious old charity, of which the origin is unknown, but to which the name Marston is attached, provides the sum of £22 yearly, derived from land; of this one-third is devoted to the schools, one-third as head money to the married poor of the parish, and one third to the maintenance of the church and the pack-horse bridge. It would be interesting to know whether there are any other ancient charities for the maintenance of these now rare bridges.—A. S. ORLEBAR.

### THE SUPPLY OF HOME-GROWN TIMBER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your leading article some weeks ago, "An Impetus to Forestry," has encouraged me to write the following remarks as to the lines on which such a science is likely to prove successful commercially. That a knowledge of forestry will enable the landowner to realise his assets of timber more profitably than he does at present no one will question; but that forestry will ever produce in these islands a supply of the fir of commerce—*pinus sylvestris*—at all equal to the demand, or even at a profit in small quantities, seems very doubtful. In England the value of well-preserved shooting will in nearly all cases outweigh all suggestions of extensive planting, for large timber and game will not go together. In the hilly counties on either side the Border localities might be found, round centres, for sawmills, and with

facilities for distributing the timber over the country: but much of the land could not be spared, and "any poor ground" will not produce good wood. There are left, then, very large estates further North, like Mar and Invercauld, or Strathspey (where 1,000 acres are to be cut annually in a 60-year rotation); and, as to their prospects of success, the following opinion of a timber merchant may be of interest (I quote from memory): "The sizes of Russian and Scandinavian timber imported by Scotch merchants are: 3 x 9, 2½ x 7, 2 x 5, 2 x 4½, 2 x 4, red and white; also planks and deals, 3 x 11 and 3 x 9, for joinery purposes, and prepared flooring and matchboards. These four latter I do not think could ever be replaced by home-grown timber, even if such large sizes were obtainable from the small Scotch trees, on account of their inferior quality. Leaving the 3 x 9 out of the question, as British trees seldom grow to the dimensions necessary to cut these sizes, the prices ruling this year (1904), which has been an ordinary one, were:

|             |     |             |     |                |
|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|----------------|
| 2½ x 7      | ... | Red, £8 5 0 | ... | White, £7 15 0 |
| 2 x 5 } ... |     | 6 15 0      | ... | 6 0 0          |
| 2 x 4½ }    |     |             |     |                |
| 2 x 4 ...   |     | 7 5 0       | ... | 6 10 0         |

per St. Petersburg standard of 165 cubic feet, c.i.f. to the English ports; adding to which another £1 for unloading, wharfing dues, etc., and railway carriage to inland towns, the total cost to the provincial merchant is from £7 to £9, or 10d. to 1s. 1½d. per cubic foot. The case appears to be, then, that even if the forest-owner can grow the larch or *pinus sylvestris* (the latter I consider inferior to the imported varieties), and can sell them at this price at a profit, his market will be extremely limited, as most of the timber-consuming towns of Scotland are seaports." He further adds: "Larch is equal to, if not better than, Scandinavian red-wood for several purposes (telegraph-poles, pit-props, for instance), and is the one wood likely to be of commercial value, though up to the present the difficulty of obtaining it of level quality from home-grown sources has caused the Post Office and railway companies to obtain it elsewhere."—B. V.

### RAT AND BLACKBIRD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Looking from my window on February 23rd, I noticed a blackbird walking under some laurels in the garden; suddenly a grey animal pounced upon it from the back and pinned it to the ground. I thought the assailant must be a weasel, but after the bird had fluttered and struggled for a while, I



saw it was a large rat, which then carried its victim towards a small tool-house a few yards away. The next day part of the brick flooring was taken up, the remains of the bird found, the rat dislodged by means of hot water poured into its run, and quickly despatched by a couple of terriers. Have any of your readers known of rats killing blackbirds in this manner? The bird was a fine one, and did not seem to be ailing or disabled in any way. The rat must have crept up from behind, or dropped from a low branch of the laurels.—NOTTS.

### WINCHELSEA CHURCH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

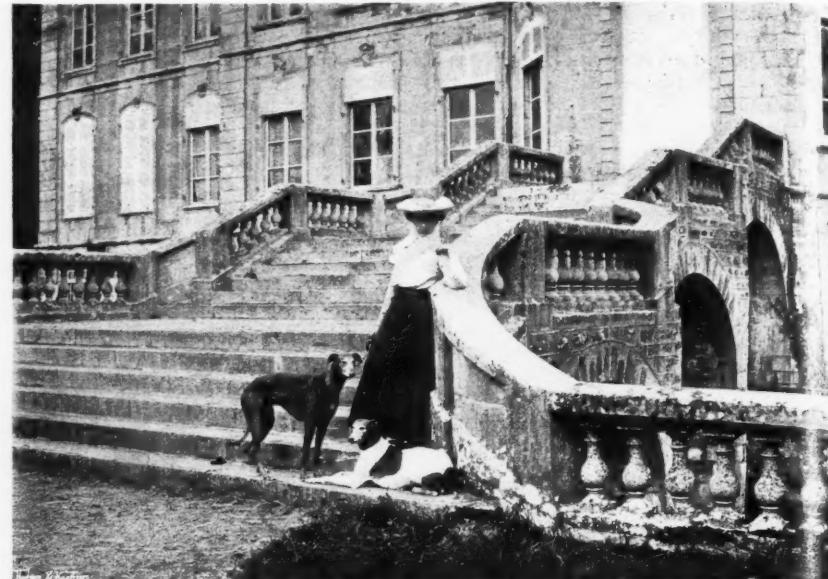
SIR,—In her protest, in COUNTRY LIFE of February 25th, against the "restoration" of Winchelsea Church, Miss B. Sidney Woolf has not alluded to the effacement of something which it is less possible to replace than even the patina of age. I mean the touch of the craftsman's hand, that which William Morris called "the sign of humanity" in architecture. Time and weather may be trusted to colour the stones again after the lapse of years (indeed, there is some satisfaction in reflecting that time and weather go on with their work whilst the restorer sleeps); but as to replacing the old surface, I must quote Morris again. "How does it happen, for example, that a restored building (excuse my mentioning that word) which is very carefully done as to the moulding, and all the rest of it, and is really an absolutely faultless imitation of an Edwardian building, does not look in the faintest degree like an Edwardian building? Many people would say, because it has got to get old and grey; now it is all new. But I beg to say that is all nonsense; the Edwardian building when brand-new did not look like this imitation of the present day. There

is no doubt about that, and the reason why it did not look like it is that the whole surface—every moulding, every inch of rubble wall, and what not—was done in a totally different manner; that is to say, the old workmen who did it used, to a great extent, different tools, and certainly used the tools in a different way." Considerations of structural stability may necessitate scraping and pointing on the outside of the south wall of Winchelsea Church, and filing the tracery of the window lights into the mathematical precision of an architect's plan; but the Alard tombs are inside the church, and what little of them remains untouched looks so sound that the only reason one could think of for scraping away their original surface would be a desire to bring them into harmony with the outside of the walls. One thought that this sort of "restoration" had gone out with the Victorian era; one certainly hoped that Edward I.'s ancient seaport would escape such treatment in the reign of Edward VII.—  
AGNES B. WARBURG.

## A FRENCH CHATEAU.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of the Château de Colembert, near Boulogne, for which I hope you will be able to find a place. The château was originally the property of the Comtes de Colembert, and was built in the fifteenth century. During the French Revolution it was burnt down by the peasants. The present edifice was built later on, after the style of the Luxembourg. The château, which stands in a charming and extensive park, is surrounded by a moat, the horseshoe bridge over which can be seen in the photograph.—A. A. WYSE.



## WATER-FINDING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—You published in your issue of February 4th a very interesting letter on "Water-finding" from a correspondent who points out that this is a subject in which scientists have a large field open for investigation. That its practical importance is already appreciated is evident from the fact that Mr. James Mansergh, in his presidential address to the Institution of Civil Engineers three or four years ago, devoted four pages to remarks on the work of the "dowser, or water-finder," and stated that "he is a man whose work cannot be lightly pooh-poohed or summarily ignored."—M. R. A.

## THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC FORESTRY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have read with much pleasure your admirable commentary on Mr. Mahler's generous gift of land to the Denbighshire County Council for forestry purposes, and venture to hope that you will invite contributions from your readers on the whole subject of afforestation—a subject of great national importance. May I say, by way of preface to a few modest remarks, that my own interest in forestry—always keen—was much stimulated by reading, four

grown on much of the poor and waste lands which form a considerable percentage of the area of the United Kingdom—lands which at present yield a very inconsiderable return in crop or rent. The question to be answered is, How are these lands to be afforested? It is not every landowner who has either the capital or the inclination to make a large investment for the benefit (in part at least) of posterity. County councils may adopt the excellent recommendation of the Departmental Committee to acquire land for experimental plots, but these assemblies, even of progressive tendencies,



or five years ago, Mr. Simpson's "The New Forestry," which led me to devote my holiday that summer to visiting one or two of the German forests described therein. That visit was a revelation to me of the possibilities of timber production, and fully convinced me of the sad want of training and system in our own country. Happily, the last few years have seen increasing attention given to the subject, enhanced by the publication of essays and books on scientific forestry, and by the report of the Departmental Committee. There is now a weighty consensus of opinion that timber can be profitably

have a wholesome regard for the ratepayer's pocket; so that unless landowners follow the example set them in Denbighshire, it is to be feared that the recommendation to acquire land will be more or less a counsel of perfection. Therefore, it seems to me that nothing short of energetic State action will result in a solution of the problem, and I would suggest that Government be urged to move in the following directions: (1) To devote an annual sum to the systematic planting of Crown lands, under the supervision of the Woods and Forests Department: £100,000 a year, a mere drop in the ocean of our national expenditure, would probably suffice to plant and fence 8,000 acres to 10,000 acres. (2) To make grants to county councils for the acquisition and maintenance of suitable areas to be used as experimental plots and nurseries. The value of careful and scientific experiment cannot be overestimated, especially when it is borne in mind that our existing data are so meagre and unreliable. The county councils, which are devoting more and more attention to agricultural education, might in some cases obtain the co-operation of university and agricultural colleges, and make forestry a part of the regular curriculum. (3) To make loans to private landowners upon the security of the growing timber, where other security is not offered. The adoption of this course should greatly encourage estate planting by owners whose lack of capital has hitherto been the sole obstacle to such action on their part.  
—A LAND AGENT.

## ON THE ROADSIDE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]  
SIR,—I enclose a print taken on the roadside near Thorpe, Staines, showing what, I think, is unusual, viz., three large trees isolated and dominating three main roads which meet at the spot. I cannot find that the railings in space between the three trunks has been at any time used for any particular purpose, and I conclude it is simply a measure of preservation. Perhaps the view may be of sufficient interest for your journal.—M. ATKINSON.

## THE WORD "CARAT."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]  
SIR,—The notoriety attached to this great premier diamond of over 3,000 carats weight, and measuring 4½ in. by 2½ in., raises a question about the word *carat*. Popularly it is connected with the root words for "horn," and the Rev. Professor Skeat does so ally the Arabic *girrat* to the Greek *κέρας* through *κεράτων*, a small horn; but surely this is a popular error! We start with the misnamed locust tree, *Ceratonia siliqua*, which produces a seed called the carob-bean, Spanish *al-garoba*; Arabic, *Khazab*; the pods enclosing the seed in the *girrat* named above. Now the pod's a husk, so a covering, not a "horn"; here the letters q-r-t are the basis of "carat," and, in Hebrew, *Karim* is "to cover," so *carth* and *Kereh*, cities or cities, or in Carthage, etc. The beans or seeds of the carob tree were the first carats used by Arabs as weights for precious stones, called *girrat*, from the containing pods.—A. HALE.